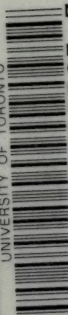


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# Backblock Ballads and Later Verses



C. J. DENNIS

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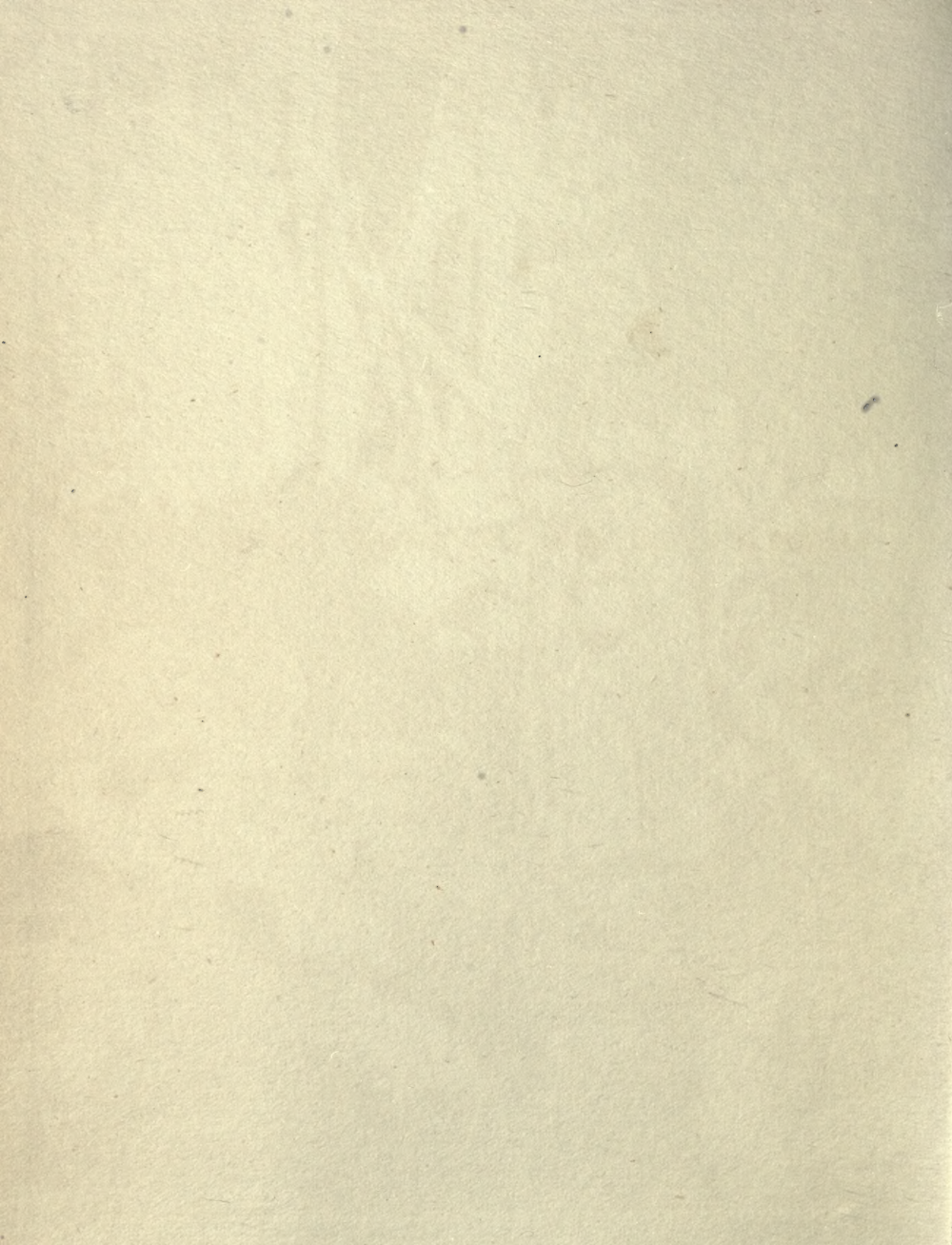








HAI GYE





BACKBLOCK BALLADS AND LATER VERSES



THEORY OF THE EARTH AND ITS HISTORY









*And he stepped around the waggon, not with footsteps weak and laggin'  
But with firm, determined bearin', as he flung the whip on high.*



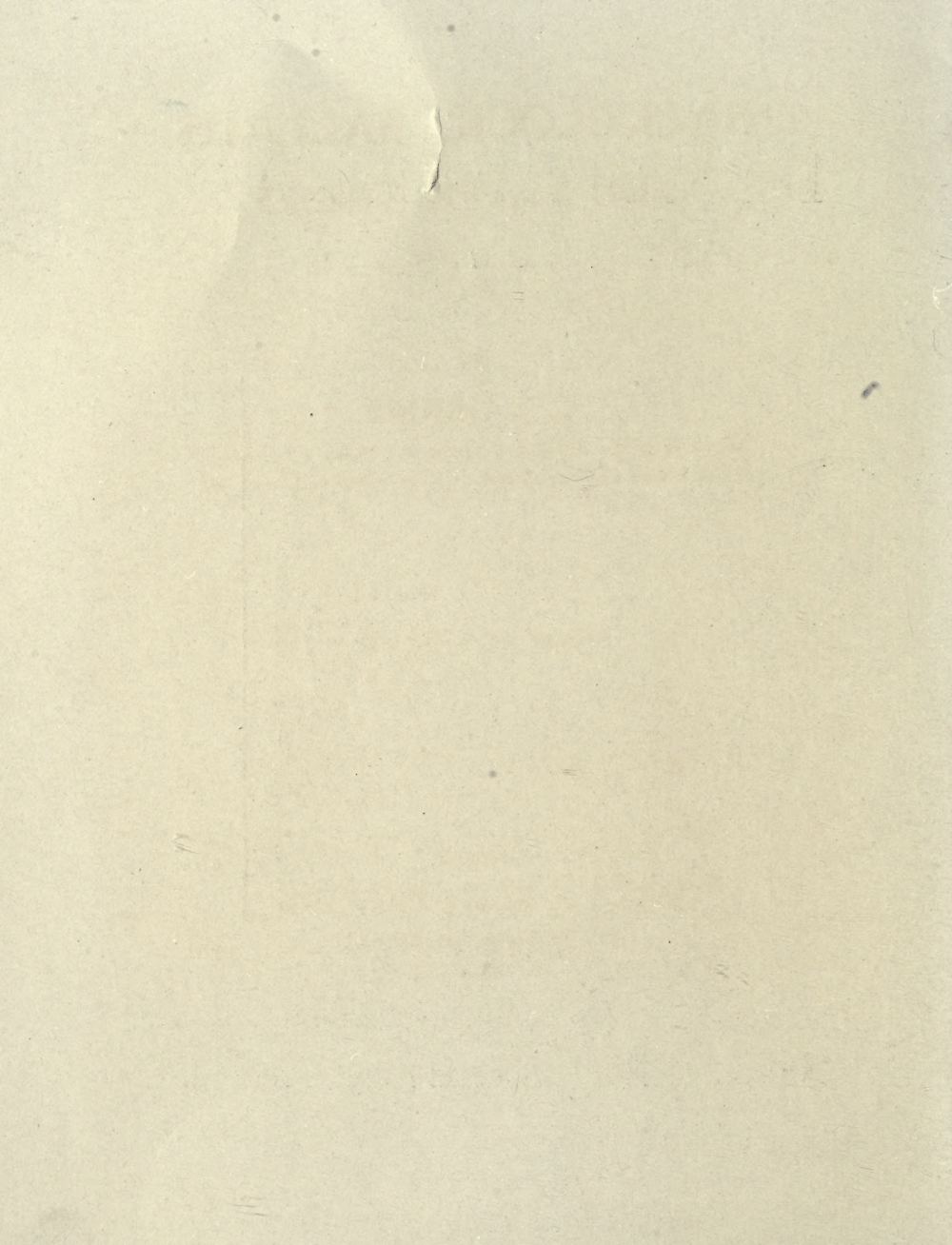
# BACKBLOCK BALLADS

AND LATER VERSES

*By C. J. Dennis*



  
SYDNEY. Angus & Robertson Ltd.





# BACKBLOCK BALLADS AND LATER VERSES

BY

C. J. DENNIS

Author of "The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke," "Doreen,"  
"The Moods of Ginger Mick," "The Glugs of Gosh," etc.

*Illustrated by Hal Gye*

SYDNEY

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## An Old Master

We were cartin' laths and palin's from the slopes of Mount St.  
Leonard,

With our axles near the road-bed and the mud as stiff as glue;  
And our bullocks weren't precisely what you'd call conditioned  
nicely,

And meself and Messmate Mitchell had our doubts of gettin'  
through.

It had rained a tidy skyful in the week before we started,  
But our tucker-bag depended on the sellin' of our load;  
So we punched 'em on by inches, liftin' 'em across the pinches,  
Till we struck the final section of the worst part of the road.

We were just congratlatin' one another on the goin',  
When we blundered in a pot-hole right within the sight of goal,  
Where the bush-track joins the metal. Mitchell, as he saw her  
settle,  
Justified his reputation at the peril of his soul.

We were in a glue-pot, certain—red and stiff and most tenacious ;  
Over naves and over axles—waggon sittin' on the road.

" 'Struth," says I, "they'll never lift her. Take a shot from Hell  
to shift her.

Nothin' left us but unyoke 'em and sling off the blessed load."

Now, beside our scene of trouble stood a little one-roomed humpy,  
Home of an enfeebled party by the name of Dad McGee.

Daddy was, I pause to mention, livin' on an old-age pension  
Since he gave up bullock-punchin' at the age of eighty-three.

Startled by our exclamations, Daddy hobbled from the shanty,  
Gazin' where the stranded waggon looked like some half-  
foundered ship.

When the state o' things he spotted, "Looks," he says, "like you  
was potted,"

And he toddles up to Mitchell. "Here," says he, "gimme that  
whip."

Well! I've heard of transformations; heard of fellers sort of  
changin'

In the face of sudden danger or some great emergency;  
Heard the like in song and story and in bush traditions hoary,  
But I nearly dropped me bundle as I looked at Dad McGee.



While we gazed he seemed to toughen ; as his fingers gripped the handle

His old form grew straight and supple, and a light leapt in his eye ;

And he stepped around the waggon, not with footsteps weak and laggin',

But with firm, determined bearin', as he flung the whip on high.

Now he swung the leaders over, while the whip-lash snarled and volleyed ;

And they answered like one bullock, strainin' to each crack and clout ;

But he kept his cursin' under till old Brindle made a blunder ;

Then I thought all Hell had hit me, *and the master opened out.*

And the language ! Oh, the language ! Seemed to me I must be dreamin' ;

While the wondrous words and phrases only genius could produce

Roared and rumbled, fast and faster, in the throat of that Old Master—

Oaths and curses tipped with lightning, cracklin' flames of fierce abuse.

Then we knew the man before us was a Master of our callin';  
One of those great lords of language gone for ever from Out-  
back;

Heroes of an ancient order; men who punched across the border;  
Vanished giants of the sixties; puncher-princes of the track.

Now we heard the timbers strainin', heard the waggon's loud  
complainin',

And the master cried triumphant, as he swung 'em into line,  
As they put their shoulders to it, lifted her, and pulled her  
through it:

"That's the way we useter do it in the days o' sixty-nine!"

Near the foot of Mount St. Leonard lives an old, enfeebled party  
Who retired from bullock-punchin' at the age of eighty-three.  
If you seek him folk will mention, merely, that he draws the  
pension;

But to us he looms a Master—Prince of Punchers, Dad McGee!



## “Paw”

Haw!

Ai've just obteneed a pension for mai Paw.

And you *should* hev seen the people thet were theah.

*Re-ally*, it was surpraising!

Maind, Ai am not criticaising,

But it was *embarrassing*, Ai do *decleah*.

Ai met the Snobson-Smythes and Toady-Browns, and many  
moah

Belonging to ouah set; and wondahed what *they* came theah  
foah.

And, of course, Ai didn't say a *word* of Paw.

Ai rather think *they've* nevah *heard* of Paw.

But Ai thought it well to mention

That Ai came to get the pension

For an agéd person who had worked for Maw.

The Snobson-Smythes said, "*Fancy!* That is just why *we*  
came dahn."

But Ai've heard they hev a mothah hidden somewheah out  
of tahn.

Haw!

Ai *do* deserve some gratitude from Paw.

To think what Ai've *gone thro'* foah him to-day!

Mixing with the lowah classes—

And Ai never saw such masses

Of disreputable creatuahs, Ai *must* say.

Impostors, Ai've no doubt, if most of them were but  
unmasked.

And then, the most *humiliating* questions Ai was asked!

Yes, he forced me to admit it was foah Paw.

Asked me, brutally, if it was foah *mai* Paw.

Some low-bred official fellow,

Who conversed in quaita a bellow,

And he patronised me laike a high Bashaw.

And his questions, rudely *personal*, Ai hardly could *enduah*.

The Government should teach its people mannaahs, Ai am  
suaah!

Haw!

Ai'm *glad* we've got the pension foah pooah Paw.

His maintenance has been—O, *such* a strain.

Ouah establishment's extensive

And *exceedingly* expensive,

As mai husband has remawked taime and again.

It's quaita a *miracle* how Ai contrive to dress at *all*.

He cut me dahn to *twenty guineas* for last Mayoral Ball!



And it's such a boah to hev to *think* of Paw—  
To hev a secret skeleton laike Paw.

Paw, you know, was once a diggah,

And he cuts no social figgah.

And his *mannahs*! O, they touch us on the raw.  
Of course, we're *very* fond of him, and all *thet* sort of thing;  
But we couldn't hev him—*could* we?—when theah's naice  
folk visiting.

Haw!

It's cost us pawnds and *pawnds* to care foah Paw.

And then, it is so hard to keep him dawk.

Why, no later than last Mond'y,

Ai was out with Lady Grundy,

When we ran raight *into* him outsaide the Pawk.

Goodness knows! Ai managed, *somehow*, to elude him with  
a nod,

And Ai said he was a tradesman; but she must hev thought  
it *odd*.

You can't *picture* the ubiquity of Paw,

And he's really *very* obstinate, is Paw.

Why, he held to the contention

That this most convenient pension

Was a thing *he* hadn't any *raight* to draw!

He said *we'd* kept him eighteen months, and ought to keep  
him yet.

But mai husband soon convinced him thet he couldn't count  
on *thet*.

Haw!

He was a pioneah, you know, mai Paw.

But of mai early laife Ai never tell.

Paw *worked*, as Ai hev stated;

And he had us educated;

And, later on, *Ai* married rather *well*.

And then, you know, deah Paw became—er—well,  
embarrassing.

For he *is* so unconventional and—all thet sort of thing.

But the Government has taken ovah Paw.

We are happy now we've aisolated Paw.

And a bettah era's dawning,

For mai husband said this mawning

Thet the money saved would buy a motah-caw.

Paw was so good to us when we were young, that, you'll  
allow,

It's really taimé the Government did something foah him  
now.

## The Builders

Behold, I built a fowlhouse in my yard!

Two months ago the great work was begun,  
And every eventide I laboured hard,

What time my daily office grind was done.  
'Tis to my industry a monument.  
The fowls, my wife, and I are well content.

Indeed, I built a fowlhouse. God forbid—

Although I made it, floor and roof and wall—  
That I should boast about this thing I did.

I mention it most modestly withal.  
Just these two hands, this brain were all I had.  
I built it on my own, and I am glad.

And, as I toiled at eve, my wife would come,

The candle, nails and divers tools to hold;  
And when I swore because I hit my thumb

She did not hang the contract up to scold,  
Nor move a vote of censure, and maintain  
The thing should be pulled down and built again.



She is my helpmate, both in name and deed;  
Nor does she deem it policy to nag.  
And when she saw my wounded finger bleed  
She bound it up, most tenderly, with rag.  
Thus, for one end, did both of us conspire—  
To have a fowlhouse was our joint desire.

And, when I went about my work in town,  
No haunting vision filled my day with dread  
That she would pull the whole contraption down  
And start a building of her own instead.  
I knew, indeed, she would take care to leave  
Unharm'd my handiwork of yester eve.

You'll note—if you're at all intelligent—  
Our system was simplicity itself:  
We wanted something, that was evident,  
To wit, a fowlhouse, perches, and a shelf  
For nests. I got some timber, tools and nails,  
And set to work. This method seldom fails.

And when I'd done, and saw it stand complete,  
With triumph was I most absurdly filled.  
A tiny thing, enclosing ten square feet,  
That any deft suburbanite might build—  
Yet was my soul with satisfaction seized;  
And, on the whole, I think the fowls were pleased.

Now that my hens are well and snugly housed,  
And given cosy nests in which to lay,  
It seems their gratitude has been aroused;  
Our egg supply increases day by day.  
And yet, I vow, when I their house designed  
No sordid thought of eggs was in my mind.

Maybe I seem a trifle too inclined  
To brag about a very simple feat.  
Yet strange ideas crowd into my mind  
When I sit down to scan my morning sheet,  
And read of other builders who should be  
Goliaths in comparison with me.

Their mighty undertakings, I've no doubt—  
Vast railway lines that span a continent,  
And other matters that I read about—  
Are apt to cause much wordy argument.  
Yet I, who calmly built a house for fowls,  
Can feel contempt for these unseemly howls.

For when they move to build, unholy shouts  
Go up to Heaven from opponent throats;  
The Ins are ever brawling with the Outs;  
And both are scheming sordidly for votes.  
They build not as true builders, such as I,  
Who build for love, and scorn the trade they ply.

Thank God, my wife and I are well content  
In doing things to win a modest name  
Without the aid of Party Government  
And all the meanness of that paltry Game.  
Honest endeavour, and some boards and nails,  
Pride in your work—this method seldom fails.

I am so diffident, I hardly care  
To give advice to statesmen eminent,  
And yet, on this occasion, shall I dare  
To offer them some small encouragement:  
Let them forgo their wrangles, curses, howls,  
And strive to build a little place for fowls.

'Tis sheer presumption, surely, to compare  
Myself with statesmen in high honour decked;  
Yet do I feel emboldened to declare  
That I am more deserving of respect.  
*They*, by their brawls, a mighty work have marred;  
*I* built an honest fowlhouse in my yard.



## Wheat

"Sowin' things an' growin' things, an' watchin' of 'em grow;  
That's the game," my father said, an' father ought to know.  
"Settin' things an' gettin' things to grow for folks to eat:  
That's the life," my father said, "that's very hard to beat."  
For my father was a farmer, as his father was before,  
Just sowin' things an' growin' things in far-off days of yore,  
In the far-off land of England, till my father found his feet  
In the new land, in the true land, where he took to growin' wheat.

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Oh, the sound of it is sweet!  
I've been praisin' it an' raisin' it in rain an' wind an' heat  
Since the time I learned to toddle, till it's beatin' in my  
noddle,  
Is the little song I'm singin' you of Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.*

Plantin' things—an' grantin' things is goin' as they should,  
An' the weather altogether is behavin' pretty good—  
Is a pleasure in a measure for a man that likes the game,  
An' my father he would rather raise a crop than make a name.

For my father was a farmer, an' "All fame," he said, "ain't reel;  
An' the same it isn't fillin' when you're wantin' for a meal."  
So I'm followin' his footsteps, an' a-keepin' of my feet,  
While I cater for the nation with my Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! When the poets all are beat  
By the reason that the season for the verse crop is a cheat,  
Then I comes up bright an' grinnin' with the knowledge  
that I'm winnin',  
With the rhythm of my harvester an' Wheat, Wheat, Wheat.*

Readin' things an' heedin' things that clever fellers give,  
An' ponderin' an' wonderin' why we was meant to live—  
Muddlin' through an' fuddlin' through philosophy an' such  
Is a game I never took to, an' it doesn't matter much.  
For my father was a farmer, as I might 'a' said before,  
An' the sum of his philosophy was, "Grow a little more.  
For growin' things," my father said, "it makes life sort o' sweet  
An' your conscience never swats you if your game is growin'  
wheat."

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Oh, the people have to eat!  
An' you're servin', an' deservin' of a velvet-cushion seat  
In the cocky-farmers' heaven when you come to throw a  
seven;  
An' your password at the portal will be, "Wheat, Wheat,  
Wheat."*

Now, the preacher an' the teacher have a callin' that is high  
While they're spoutin' to the doubtin' of the happy by an' by;  
But I'm sayin' that the prayin' it is better for their souls  
When they've plenty wheat inside 'em in the shape of penny rolls.  
For my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit an' grieve  
When he thought about the apple that old Adam got from Eve.  
It was foolin' with an orchard where the serpent got 'em beat,  
An' they might 'a' kept the homestead if they'd simply stuck to  
wheat.

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! If you're seekin' to defeat  
Care an' worry in the hurry of the crowded city street,  
Leave the hustle all behind you; come an' let contentment  
find you  
In a cosy little cabin lyin' snug among the wheat.*

In the city, more's the pity, thousands live an' thousands die  
Never carin', never sparin' pains that fruits may multiply;  
Breathin', livin', never givin'; greedy but to have an' take,  
Dyin' with no day behind 'em lived for fellow-mortals' sake.  
Now my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit and laugh  
At the "fools o' life," he called 'em, livin' on the other half.  
Dyin' lonely, missin' only that one joy that makes life sweet—  
Just the joy of useful labour, such as comes of growin' wheat.

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! Let the foolish scheme an' cheat;  
But I'd rather, like my father, when my span o' life's  
complete,*



*Feel I'd lived by helpin' others; earned the right to call 'em  
brothers  
Who had gained while I was gainin' from God's earth His  
gift of wheat.*

When the settin' sun is gettin' low above the western hills,  
When the creepin' shadows deepen, and a peace the whole land  
fills,

Then I often sort o' soften with a feelin' like content,  
An' I feel like thankin' Heaven for a day in labour spent.  
For my father was a farmer, an' he used to sit an' smile,  
Realizin' he was wealthy in what makes a life worth while.  
Smilin', he has told me often, "After all the toil an' heat,  
Lad, he's paid in more than silver who has grown one field of  
wheat."

*Wheat, Wheat, Wheat! When it comes my turn to meet  
Death the Reaper, an' the Keeper of the Judgment Book I  
greet,*

*Then I'll face 'em sort o' calmer with the solace of the  
farmer  
That he's fed a million brothers with his Wheat, Wheat,  
Wheat.*

## The Lovers

One idle hour she sought to see  
Whose image 'twas he cherished so,  
(All fondly certain whose 'twould be)  
And found—a girl she did not know.

A trusting maiden's modest face,  
All innocence and purity.  
"What nun is this that fills my place?  
Alas, he loves me not!" sighed she.

"Nay, daughter, let no foolish fears  
Your trust in his devotion mar,"  
Her mother said. "Come, dry your tears;  
That is the girl he thinks you are."

All fondly curious with love—  
(Half guessing what he would lay bare)  
He rifled her heart's treasure-trove,  
And found—a stranger's image there.

"This is the man she loves!" said he,  
And, searching in the noble face,  
Read high resolve and constancy.

"This saint," he cried, "usurps my place!"

"Nay," spake his friend. "Your anger cool;  
Gaze on that godlike face once more;  
And then be satisfied, O fool;  
*That* is the man she takes you for."



## “Got-a-Fag”

He was tall and tough and stringy, with the shoulders of an axeman,

Broad and loose, with greenhide muscles; and a hand shaped to the reins;

He was slow of speech and prudent, something of a Nature student,

With the eye of one who gazes far across the saltbush plains.

Smith, by name; but long forgotten was his legal patronymic

In a land where every bushman wears some unbaptismal tag;  
And through frequent repetition of a well-worn requisition,

“Smith” had long retired in favour of the title, “Got-a-Fag.”

Not until the war was raging for a month, or maybe longer,

Did the tidings reach the station, blest with quite unfrequent mails;

And, though still a steady grafter, he grew restless ever after,

And he pondered long of evenings, seated on the stockyard rails.

Primed with sudden resolution, he arose one summer morning,  
Casually mentioned fighting, as he deftly rolled his swag;  
Then, in accents almost hearty, bade his mate, "So long, old  
Party!

I am on some Square-head huntin'. See you later. Got a fag?"

Ten long, sunburned days in saddle, down through spinifex and  
saltbush,

Then a two-days' railroad journey landed him at last in town  
Charged with an aggressive feeling, heightened by the forthright  
dealing

With a shrewd but chastened spieler who had sought to take  
him down.

"Smart and stern" describes the war-lord who presided at  
recruiting.

To him slouched an apparition, drawling, "Boss, I've got a nag;  
Risn' four—good prad he's counted. Better shove me in the  
mounted;

Done a little bit o' shootin'—gun an' rifle. Got a fag?"

Two months later, drilled and kneaded to a shape approaching  
martial,

Yet with hints of that lithe looseness discipline can never kill,  
With that keen eye grown yet shrewder, an example to the cruder,  
Private Smith (and, later, Sergeant) stinted speech and studied  
drill.

"Smith" indeed but briefly served him, and his former appellation  
 In its aptness seized the fancy of the regimental wag,  
 When an apoplectic Colonel gasped, "Of all the dashed, infernal. . . ."

As this Private Smith saluted, with "Ribuck, Sir! Got a fag?"

What he thought, or how he marvelled at the unfamiliar customs  
 Of those ancient and historic lands that later met his eyes,  
 He was never heard to mention; though he voiced one bold  
 contention,

That the absence of wire fences marked a lack of enterprise.

Soon his shrewd resource, his deftness, won him fame in many  
 places.

Things he did with wire and whipcord moved his company to  
 brag.

And when aught concerning horses called for knowledge in the  
 forces

Came a hurried, anxious message, "Hang the vet! Send  
 Got-a-Fag!"

Then, one morning, he was missing, and a soldier who had seen  
 him

Riding for the foe's entrenchments bade his mates abandon  
 hope.



Calm he seemed, but strangely daring; some weird weapons he  
was bearing  
Built of twisted wire and iron, and a dozen yards of rope.

At the dawn a startled sentry, through the early morn-mists  
peering,  
Saw a dozen shackled foemen down the sand dunes slowly  
drag.  
Sore they seemed, and quite dejected, while behind them, cool,  
collected,  
Swearing at a busy sheep-dog, rode their drover, Got-a-Fag.

To the Colonel's tent he drove them, brandishing a stock-whip  
featly,  
Briskly calling "Heel 'em, Laddiel" While the warrior of  
rank  
Sniffed, and then exclaimed with loathing, "What's this smell of  
burning clothing?"  
Said the drover, "Got 'em branded 'A.—Broad Arrow'—off-side  
flank.

"A," he drawled, "stan's for Australia, an' the Gov'ment brand's  
in order.  
'Crown—G.R.' upon the shoulder marks 'em for the King an'  
flag.

Roped the blighters, same as how we fix the calves on Kinchacowie.

But it's dead slow sort o' must'rin'," he concluded. "Got a fag?"

When the weary war is over, back to his old cattle station,

If luck holds, he'll one day journey, casually drop his swag,

Drawling, "Been up yonder—fightin' . . . Not much doin' . . .  
mostly skitin' . . .

Gimme drovin' for excitement. . . . Rain seems wantin'. . . .

Got a fag?"

## The Chase of Ages

Light of my lives! Is the time not yet?  
Lo, I've brooded on a star  
Through many a year, with the hope held dear  
That, in some future far,  
I would know the joy of a love returned.  
Are my lives lived vainly, all,  
Since that cosmic morn when life, new-born,  
First moved on this mundane ball?

Yea, I mind it yet, when first we met  
On a tertiary rock,  
How the graceful charm of your rudiments  
Imparted love's first shock.  
But I was a mere organic cell  
In that early Eocene,  
While you were a prim, primordial germ,  
And the mother of protogene.



So I loved and died, and the ages sped  
Till the time of my second birth;  
When I took my place in the cosmic race,  
And again came down to earth.  
Once more we met. Ah, Love, not yet!  
You were far above my state!  
For how could I raise my mollusc gaze  
To a virtuous vertebrate?

Again we died, and again we slept,  
And again we came to be—  
I as an anthropoidal ape,  
And you as a chimpanzee.  
You as a charming chimpanzee,  
With a high patrician air;  
And I watched you waltz from tree to tree  
As I slunk in my lowly lair.

And yet again, in an age or so,  
We met, and I mind the sob  
I sobbed when I found that I was—what?  
And you were a thingumbob.  
You had sold your tail for a kind of soul,  
You had grown two thumbs beside;  
And I knew again that my love was vain,  
So I went to the woods and died.

As a humble homunculus, later on,  
I crept to your cave at night,  
And howled long, love-lorn howls in vain  
To my lady troglodyte.  
And I grew insane at your cold disdain,  
And my howlings filled the place,  
Till your father sought me out one night,  
And—again I yearned in space.

Then, Light of my lives! Is the time not yet?  
Say, in what distant life—  
In what dim age that is still to come  
May I win and call you wife?  
Still high above! My Love, my Love!  
Nay, how can I raise my eyes  
To you, my Star of the Eocene,  
My ever elusive prize?

Lo, Time speeds on, the suns grow cold,  
And the earth infirm and hoar,  
And, ages past, we are here at last—  
Ay, both on the earth once more.  
But, alas, Dear Heart, as far apart  
As e'er in this cosmic whirl;  
For I'm but a lowly writer-man  
And you are a tea-room girl.

## A Guide for Poits

*(Compiled by The Sentimental Bloke.)*

I ain't no verse-'og. When I busts in song  
An' fills the air wiv choonful melerdy,  
I likes fer uvver coves to come along  
An' biff the lyre in company wiv me.

So, when I sees some peb beguile an hour  
Be joinin' in the chorus o' me song,  
I never sees no use in turnin' sour;  
Fer singin' days wiv no one larsts too long.

I'd like to see the Rocks an' Little Lon  
Grow centres for the art uv weavin' rhyme,  
Wiv dinky 'arps fer blokes to plunk upon,  
An' spruikin' poits workin' overtime.

I'd love to listen to each choonful lay  
Uv soulful coots who scorn to write fer gain;  
To see True Art bloom down in Chowder Bay,  
An' Culcher jump the joint in Spadger's Lane.

Gawstruth! Fer us life's got no joy to spare,  
We're short uv bird-songs, "soarin' clear an' pure."  
A bloke is 'ardly orf the bottle there  
Before 'e's in the jug—a bird fer sure.

So 'oo am I to say no blokes shall sing  
Jist 'ow 'an where an' when sich blokes may choose?  
She's got no lines to show, nor yet no ring.  
Lor' bli'me! I ain't *married* to me Muse!

An', square an' all, to show there's no offence,  
To show that in me 'cart true friendship lies,  
I gives free gratis, an' wivout ixpense,  
A few igzamples, jist to put 'em wise.

First, choose some swingin' metre, sich as this,  
That Omar used—per Fitz—to boost the wine.  
An' 'ere's a point true artists shouldn't miss:  
Sling in a bit o' slang to ev'ry line.

An' when yer full o' them alternate rhymes—  
As all the true push poits is at times—  
Jist ring the changes, as I'm doin' now;  
An' find ixcuse to say: "The bloomin' cow!"



Or, comin' back to Omar's style again,  
It's easy fer to pen a sweet refrain

Wiv this 'ere jist a dead-'ead sort o' line,  
An' this one rhymin' wiv the former twain.

An' though this style me soul 'as often vext,

Wiv care an' pains the knack is easy cort:  
This line's rhymed wiv the first, an' then the next  
Is cut orf short.

An' if yeh want to round it orf orl neat  
Jist add a couplet 'ere of equil feet.

An' 'ere's a style I've very often done:

You swing orf 'ere, an' find a second rhyme,  
Then hitch the third line to the leadin' one.

An' make the fourth lap wiv the second chime,  
An' then you sort o' come another time,  
An' jist end up the same as you begun.

It's orl dead easy when yeh know the way,  
An' 'ave the time to practise it—But, say,

Although it sort o' takes the eye, no doubt  
(An', mind yeh, I'm not sayin' but it may)—

Wivout a stock uv rhymes to see you out  
This style o' rhymin's like to turn yeh gree.

The triplets comes much 'arder than the twins;  
But I 'ave 'ad to bear 'em fer me sins.

'Ere, fer a single line, yeh change the style,  
Switch orf an' rhyme the same as you begins;  
An' then yeh comes back at it wiv a smile,  
Pertendin' it's dead easy orl the while.

Them sawed-orf lines 'as often stood me friends;  
Fer you kin cut 'em up to serve yer ends.

An' frequent I 'ave slung the dotin' throng

This sort o' song.

To ring su'prises on the eye an' ear  
Is 'arf the game. It seems to kind o' queer

The dull monotony. Yeh make a miss,

An' then do this.

Aw, 'Struth! it's pretty; but you take my tip,  
It gives a bloke the everlastin' pip

'Oo tries to live upon the game and gets. . . .

Corns on 'is brain an' melancholy debts!

Wiv sweat an' tears, wiv misery an' sighs,  
Yeh wring yer soul-case fer one drop of bliss

To give the cold, 'ard world; an' it replies,

"Prompt payment will erblige. Please settle this."

The rarest treasures of yer 'eart yeh spend  
On callous, thankless coots; an' in the end  
It comes to this: if you can't find a muse  
'Oo takes in washin', wot's the flamin' use?

## Grimbles and the Gnad

It was told me by a bushman, bald and bent, and very old,  
Upon the road to Poolyerleg; and here's the tale he told.  
'Twould seem absurd to doubt his word, so honest he appeared—  
And, as he spoke, the sou'-west wind toyed gently with his beard.

*"First it was the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters;  
An' all we buried in the end  
Was Martin's boots an' gaiters."*

With this cryptic observation he began his anecdote;  
And, when I sought particulars, he smiled and cleared his throat;  
Then sat him down, and with his brown, rough hands about his  
knees  
He told it all. And, as he spoke, his beard waved in the breeze.

*"First it was the Grimble Grubs—  
As I sez at startin'—  
Which they et his tater crop,  
Which it troubled Martin."*



"Now, this Martin was a farmer with a scientific mind"—  
(It was thus the bushman started, as his beard blew out  
behind)—

"He farmed the land and, understand, his luck was all tip-top,  
Till them there little Grimble Grubs got in his tater crop.

"P'raps you have heard of Grimble Grubs; more likely p'raps  
you've not;

When once they taste your taters you can look to lose the lot.  
An' poor Martin, he was worried till he met a feller who  
Had read a book about the Swook, the which lives in Peru.

"Now the Swook it is a beetle that inhabits Wuzzle Shrubs,  
An' it makes a steady diet of the little Grimble Grubs;  
So Martin he imported some, at very great expense,  
An' turned 'em loose to play the dooce and teach the Grimbles  
sense.

*"Then he swore by Wuzzle Swooks—  
Friends of cultivators—  
Which they et the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters.*

"But when the Wuzzle Swooks had et the Grimble Grubs right  
up,  
Then they had to change their habits for to find a bite an' sup;

So they started on his turnips, which was summat to their taste,  
Till Mister Martin's turnip patch became a howlin' waste.

"Then he natural grew peevish, till one afternoon he heard,  
From a feller in the poultry line, about the Guffer Bird  
Which is native of Mauritius and the woods of Tennessee,  
An' preys upon the Wuzzle Swooks for breakfast, lunch, and tea.

*"So he got some Guffer Birds  
Over from Mauritius,  
Which the same by nature are  
Greedy an' malicious,  
Which they et the Wuzzle Swooks—  
Plague of cultivators—  
Which they et the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters.*

"Then Martin swore by Guffer Birds, until one day he found  
They'd et up all the Wuzzle Swooks for miles an' miles around,  
An', havin' still some appetite, an' bein' mighty mean,  
They perched upon his apple trees and stripped his orchard clean.

"Here's where Martin got excited; he was in an awful funk,  
Until one day he read about the little Warty Swunk,  
Which has his home in Mexico, an' lives on Guffer Birds;  
An' Martin, bein' desperate, imported him in herds.

*"Then he praised the Warty Swunks,  
Beady-eyed and vicious,  
Which they et the Guffer Birds,  
Native of Mauritius,  
Which they et the Wuzzle Swooks—  
Plague of cultivators—  
Which they et the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters.*

"Now them Swunks were simply wonders, an' old Martin stopped his growls,  
Till they et up all the Guffer Birds, an' started on his fowls.  
An' the riots in his hen-house that occurred near every night  
They robbed him of his beauty sleep an' turned his whiskers white.

"He was wearin' to a shadder, till by accident he seen  
A picture of the Boggle Dog in some old magazine.  
And the same he was notorious for huntin' Swunks an' such,  
And for livin' on their livers which he fancied very much.

"Now the Boggle Dog of Boffin's Land is most extremely rare,  
But Martin mortgaged house an' home just to import a pair.  
They was most feerocious animals; but Martin he was mad;  
An' he sooled 'em on the Warty Swunks with all the breath  
he had.

*"Oh, he loved the Boggle Dogs,  
Called 'em 'Dear' an' 'Darlin'—  
Fierce, feerocious Boggle Dogs,  
With their savage snarlin';  
Which they et the Warty Swunks,  
Beady-eyed and vicious,  
Which they et the Guffer Birds,  
Native of Mauritius,  
Which they et the Wuzzle Swooks—  
Plague of cultivators—  
Which they et the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters.*

"Then Martin he picked up a bit, an' got his proper sleep,  
Until he found the Boggle Dogs had taken to his sheep;  
For Warty Swunks is hard to catch, and nimble on their feet,  
An' livers of merino lambs is just as nice to eat.

"Now, I'm thinkin' here that Martin must have gone a trifle mad,  
Else he'd never have imported such a creature as the Gnad;  
For the Gnad, though few folks know it, roams about the Boffin  
bogs  
An' he has a passin' fancy for the flesh of Boggle Dogs.

"But Martin he imported one with his last bit of cash,  
An' loosed him on the Boggle Dogs—an action worse than rash;



But the Boggles stayed in hidin', for the Boggles were discreet,  
And the Gnad he cast his eye around for something he could eat.

"'Sool 'em, Towser!' shouted Martin, dancin' 'mid his ravaged  
crops;

But the Gnad regarded Martin as he slowly licked his chops.  
An' the last we seen of Martin, far as I can call to mind,  
He was tearin' round his paddick with the Gnad just close behind.

*"First it was the Grimble Grubs,  
Which they et his taters,  
Then it was the Wuzzle Swooks—  
Plague of cultivators—  
Then it was the Guffer Birds,  
Native of Mauritius,  
Then it was the Warty Swunks,  
Beady-eyed an' vicious,  
Then it was the Boggle Dogs,  
With their snarls and snortin',  
Till the bad voracious Gnad  
Finished his importin'.  
An' all because the Grimble Grubs  
They got into his taters  
We never found a stitch of him  
But blucher boots and gaiters."*

Thus the bushman closed his story with a sympathetic sigh;  
Then wrung my hand most heartily, and sadly said "Good-bye."  
And, as he went, 'twas evident that he was ill at ease:  
He bowed his head, and, as I've said, his beard waved in the  
breeze.

## Langwidge

"The flamin' cows!" 'e sez; 'e did, an' *worse*;

'Twas *'orrible* the langwidge that 'e used.

It made my blood run cold to 'ear 'im curse;

An' me that taken-back-like an' confused;

W'ile them poor beasts 'e belted an' abused.

"They couldn't shift," 'e sez, "a blanky 'earse!

The flamin' cows!"

"The flamin' cows!" You *oughter* 'eard 'im curse.

You would 'a' bin that *shocked*. . . . An' the idear!

'*Im* usin' such remarks about a 'earse;

An' 'is own brother buried not a year.

"Not move a blanky 'earse!" 'e sez. My dear,

You 'ardly could imagine langwidge *worse*.

"The flamin' cows!"

"The flamin' cows!" Wot *would* the parson say?

An' 'im so friendly-like with 'im an' 'er.

I pity 'er; I do, 'cos, in 'er way,

She *is* respectable. But '*im*! It's fur

From *me*, as you well *know*, to cast a slur

On anyone; but wot I 'eard that day. . . .

"The flamin' cows!"

"The flamin' cows!" I know quite well that we  
Ain't wot you'd call thin-skinned; and nasty pride  
Is wot I never 'ad. . . . But 'er! . . . W'y she—  
She's allus that stuck-up an' full o' side;  
A sort o' thing I never could abide.  
An' all the time 'er 'usband . . . . Goodness me!  
"The flamin' cows!"

"The flamin' cows!" O' course 'e never knowed  
That I was list'nin' to 'im all the w'ile.  
'E muster bin a full hour on the road;  
An', Lord, you could 'a' 'eard 'im fer a mile.  
Jes' 'cos they stuck 'im in that boggy sile:  
"If they ain't blanky swine," 'e sez, "I'm *blowed!*  
The flamin' cows!"

"The flamin' cows!" W'y, if it 'ad occurred  
An' me not 'eard, I'd 'ardly think it true.  
An', you know well, I wouldn't breathe a word  
Against a livin' soul, I don't care 'oo;  
Not if the Queen of Hingland *arst* me to.  
But, oh, that *langwidge!* If you only 'eard!  
"The flamin' cows!"



"The flamin' cows!" 'e sez, an' more besides.

An' fancy. 'Im! To think that 'e would swear!

W'y, "Blarst!" 'e sez. . . . Yes, "*Blarst* the'r blanky 'ides!"

(Oh, you may well throw up your 'ands an' stare)

Yes—"Blarst," 'e sez, "the'r blanky 'ides an' 'air!

I'll cut the blanky skin clean off the'r sides!

The flamin' cows!"

## The Joy Ride

*Ah, Gawd! It makes me sick to think  
Of what I 'eard an' seen:  
Poor 'Arry like a wet rag flung  
Across the wrecked machine;  
An' Rose, 'er face all chiner-white  
Against the gory green.*

Now 'Arry Cox 'e drives a car  
For Doctor Percy Gray.  
Sez 'e to me: "On Sund'y nex'  
The Doc will be away.  
'Ow is it for a little trip  
To Fernville for the day?

"I know two bonzer girls," 'e sez;  
"Fair stunners, both, they are.  
There's Rose who serves behind the joint  
In Mudge's privit bar,  
An' Lena Crump who jerks the pump  
Down at the Southern Star."

Now, who'd refuse a Sund'y trip  
With girls an' all give in?  
The car was there an' oil to spare.  
To rat would be a sin!  
An' who'd refuse a drop o' booze  
When pals is flush o' tin?

*Wot all the courts an' papers say  
Can't add to my distress. . . .  
Rose, with the blood upon 'er face  
An' on 'er crumpled dress!  
An' that poor chump who got the bump—  
Ah, Gawd! 'E was a mess!*

The girls 'ad stout at ten mile out,  
An' we was drinkin' beer.  
I swear they lies like 'ell who sez  
That we was on our ear!  
For we was both, I take me oath,  
As sober as me here.

Now, Lena was a dashin' piece,  
'Igh-spirited an' flash.  
'Twas plain enough to me that day  
That 'Arry'd done 'is dash.  
An' Rose—(Ah! how 'er eyes did stare)  
Rose was my speshul mash.

It's easy now fer folks to talk  
Who might 'ave done the same.  
We meant no 'arm to anyone,  
An' 'Arry knew 'is game.  
'Twas like a flash, the skid—the crash.  
An' we was not to blame.

*I wisht I could shut out that sight;  
Fergit that awful row!  
Poor Rose! 'Er face all chiner-white,  
Like I can see it now;  
An' 'Arry like a heap o' clothes  
Jist chucked there any'ow.*

They sez we painted Fernville red;  
They sez that we was gay;  
But wot come after dulls me mind  
To wot them liars say.  
We never dreamed of death an' 'ell  
When we set out that day.

'Twas ev'nin' when we turned for 'ome;  
The moon shone full that night;  
An' for a mile or more ahead  
The road lay gleamin' white;  
An' Rose sat close a-side o' me,  
'Er face turned to the light.



Wot if we sung a song or two?  
Wot if they 'eard us shout?  
Is song an' laughter things to curse  
An' make a fuss about?  
"Go faster! faster!" Lena screams.  
An' 'Arry let 'er out.

*I'd give me soul jist to ferget.  
Gawd! how 'er eyes did stare!  
'Er kisses warm upon me lips,  
I seen 'er lyin' there,  
Blood on 'er face, all chiner-white,  
An' on 'er yellin' 'air.*

I never took no 'eed 'o pace  
(I've been on twenty trips),  
An' Rose was restin' in me arms,  
'Er cheek against my lips.  
A precious lot I dreamed of skids,  
A lot I thought o' slips.

I only know we never thinks—  
I know we never dreams  
Of folks out walkin' on that road;  
Till, sudden, Lena screams. . . .  
An', after that, the sights I saw  
I've seen again in dreams.

## THE JOY RIDE

We never seen the bloke ahead!  
'Ow can they call us rash?  
I jist seen 'Arry move to shove  
'Is arm around 'is mash;  
I seen 'er jump to grab the wheel,  
Then, Lord! . . . there came the smash!

*Aw, they can blame an' cry their shame!  
It ain't for that I care.  
I held 'er in my arms an' laughed . . . .  
Then seen 'er lyin' there,  
The moonlight streamin' on 'er face,  
An' on 'er yellor hair.*

## The Homeward Track

Once a year we lumber southward with the clip from Yarradee;  
Spell the bullocks in the township while we run our yearly spree.  
What's a bullocky to live for? Days of toil are hard and long;  
And you'd not begrudge him yearly one short week of wine and  
song.

While it lasts he asks no better. When it's over, "Yoke 'em up"  
And we'll make another promise to reject the brimming cup.  
When we've done our little cheque in, and the township's at our  
back,  
Then we start to think of mending—out along the Homeward  
Track.

For there comes a time of reck'ning when we're trudging by the  
team;  
Back again to work and worry; kind of waking from a dream;  
We begin to see the folly of a week of wicked fun,  
Bought with months of weary slaving, punching bullocks on the  
run.

But our views are somewhat tempered when we've done a twelve  
months' drouth;

And our thoughts ain't so religious when the team is heading  
south.

When the pleasure is before us, work and worry at our back,  
We forget the grim reformers out along the Homeward Track.

What's the odds? It's got to happen. What we've done we'll  
do again;

And we know it while we make 'em, resolutions are in vain.

Life's a weary track to travel, mostly full of ruts and stumps:

Those who spend their days in drudging have to take their joy  
in lumps.

Yoke 'em up an' get a move on! Gayest times must have an end,

There's a weary track to travel when you've nothing left to spend.

If there's still a bob we'll wet it, and a last glad joke we'll crack,

Time enough for vain regretting when we're on the Homeward  
Track.



## Sore Throat

The pale young man he comes to me,  
An' chats me good an' fair;  
"That langwidge that you use," sez he  
"Pollutes the good clean air.  
Why don't you chuck sich silly rot,  
An' line-up with our 'Clean-Lipped Lot?'"

Well, 'abit's 'abit; there you are,  
An' since I was a kid,  
In school an' shop an' street an' bar,  
I picked up words, I did.  
To use the fancy swears I hear  
Comes natural as sinkin' beer.

An', square an' all, I got no use  
For them poor, shrinkin' guys  
Who, at the sound of choice abuse,  
Turn pale, an' rolls their eyes.  
Who fades and wilts an' calls for nurse,  
To hear a blithered soldier's curse.

## SORE THROAT

Beef an' blood gravy's fightin' food,  
Not milk—but, all the same,  
I came to see there ain't no good  
In this crook langwidge game.  
An' so, a little vow I made,  
An' joined their swell "Clean-Lip Brigade."

'Twas 'ard! But sternly I pursoo'd  
Me course; an' wore a frown  
Thro' swallerin' me speech unchewed,  
An' chokin' curse-words down.  
Oh dear! It was a dreadful stunt!  
Then, Gracious me! I hit the Front!

A feller in the firin' line,  
Tied up with sich a gag,  
Who has to curse by look an' sign,  
He fair gets out the rag.  
An' so, I sez, each time I shoots,  
"I'll take it out of you, you —broots!"

I don't care what them goodies say,  
It's *cruel*, fightin' dumb!  
To curse a bit, once in a way,  
Relieves your feelin's some.  
I kills four men in fair, clean fight,  
An' seven extra out uv spite.

An' then there come the bay'nit charge;  
The blokes to left an' right  
They all was cursin' fine an' large,  
But I keep mum, an' fight.  
I plunks a Square-'ead in the wind,  
"Annoying fellow! There!" I grinned.

With that, a great, big 'ulkin' chap,  
Comes at me with a sword—  
(The thing *I* needed in that scrap  
Was just one *little* word).  
"Haw! You—you person—" I begun,  
But, while I talks, he gets in one.

Fair in the neck I got that swipe,  
An' crumbles in a heap;  
An' starts to think the time is ripe  
To 'ave a long, deep sleep.  
"You are intensely rude," I said.  
An' so, they leaves me there fer dead.

They invaleeds me 'ome, although  
The wound gives me no cares.  
The cause of my complaint, I know,  
Was bottlin' up me swears—  
Congestion of them "Damns" denied;  
It made me feel all swelled inside.

The pale young man he comes to me,

“Ah friend,” he says, “How how?”

Your lips are clean, I’m pleased to see,

An’ you ’ave kep’ yer vow?”

“Me lips is bonzer,” I replied,

“But, ’Struth, me throat is scarified!”



## When the Sun's Behind the Hill

There's a soft and peaceful feeling  
Comes across the farming hand  
As the shadows go a-stealing  
Slow along the new-turned land.  
The lazy curling smoke above the thatch is showing blue,  
And the weary old plough horses wander home'ard two 'n'  
two,  
With their chains a-clinkin', clankin', when their daily toil  
is through,  
And the sun's behind the hill.

Then it's slowly homeward plodding  
As the night begins to creep,  
And the barley grass is nodding  
To the daisies, all asleep,  
The crows are flying heavily, and cawing overhead;  
The sleepy milking cows are lowing sof'ly in the shed,  
And above them, in the rafters, all the fowls have gone  
to bed,  
When the sun's behind the hill.

Then it's "Harry, feed old Roaney!"  
And it's "Bill, put up the rail!"  
And it's "Tom, turn out the pony!"  
"Mary, hurry with that pail!"  
And the kiddies run to meet us, and are begging for a ride  
On the broad old "Prince" and "Darky" they can hardly sit  
    astride;  
And mother, she is bustling with the supper things inside,  
    When the sun's behind the hill.

Then it's sitting down and yarning  
When we've had our bite and sup,  
And the mother takes her darning,  
While our Mary tidies up.  
And Bess tells how the baldy cow got tangled in the wire;  
And Katie keeps the baby-boy from tumbling in the fire;  
And the baccy smoke goes curling as I suck my soothing  
    briar,  
    When the sun's behind the hill.

Then we talk about the season,  
And of how it's turning out,  
And we try to guess the reason  
For the long-continued drought.

Oh, a farmer's life ain't roses and his work is never done:  
And a job's no sooner over than another is begun.  
For he's toiling late and early from the rising of the sun  
Till he sinks behind the hill.

But it grows, that peaceful feeling  
While I'm sitting smoking there,  
And the kiddies all are kneeling  
To repeat their ev'ning prayer;  
For it seems, somehow, to lighten all the care that must  
be bore  
When the things of life are worrying, and times are  
troubling sore;  
And I pray that God will keep them when my own long-day  
is o'er,  
And the sun's behind the hill.

## 'Urry!

Now, *Ma-til-der!* Ain't cher dressed yet? I declare, the girl ain't up!

Last as ushul. Move yerself, you sleepy-'ead!

Are you goin' to lie there lazin',

W'ile I—Nell, put down that basin;

Go an' see if Bill has got the poddies fed;

Tell 'im not to move that clucky—ho, yer up, me lady, eh?

That's wot comes from gallivantin' late ut night.

Why, the sun is nearly—see now,

Don't chu *dare* talk back at me now!

Set the table, Nell! Where's Nell? Put out that light!

Now then, 'urry, goodness, 'urry! *Mary*, tell the men to come.

Oh there, drat the girl! *MA-TIL-DER! where's the jam?*

You fergot it? Well, uv all ther . . . .

*Mary!* 'Ear me tell you call ther . . . .

*Lord! there's Baldy* TANGLED IN THE BARB'-WIRE—SAM!

Now, then, take 'er steady, clumsy, or she'll cut herself—

LEAVE OFF!



Do you want the cow to—*There!* I never did!

Well, you mighter took 'er steady.

Sit up, Dad, yer late already.

Did ju put the tea in, Mary? Where's the lid?

Oh, do 'urry! Where's them buckets? *Nell*, 'as Bill brought  
in the cows?

Where's that boy? Ain't finished eatin' yet, uv course;

Eat all day if 'e wus let to.

Mary, where'd yer father 'get to?

Gone! Wot! *Call 'im back!* DAD! Wot about that 'orse?

No, indeed, it ain't my business; you kin see the man yerself.

No, I *won't!* I'm sure I've quite enough to do.

If 'e calls ter-day about it,

'E kin either go without it,

Or elst walk acrost the paddick out to you.

Are the cows in, *B-i-ll?* Oh, there they are. Well, nearly  
time they—*Nell*,

Feed the calves, an' pack the—*Yes, indeed, ju will!*

Get the sepy-rater ready.

Woa, there, Baldy—steady, *steady*.

Bail up. *Stop-er! Hi, Matilder!* MARY! BILL!

Well, uv all th' . . . *Now* you've done it.

Wait till Dad comes 'ome to-night;

When 'e sees the mess you've—*Don't stand starin' there!*  
 Go an' get the cart an' neddy;  
 An' the cream cans—are they ready?  
 Where's the . . . . There! Fergot the fowls, I *do* declare!

Chuck!—*Chook!*—CHOOK! Why, there's that white un lost  
 another chick to-day!

Nell, 'ow many did I count?—*Oh, stop that row!*

Wot's 'e doin'? Oh, you daisy!

Do you mean to tell me, lazy,

Thet you 'aven't fed the pigs until jus' now?

Oh, *do 'urry!* There's the men ull soon be knockin' off fer  
 lunch.

An' we 'aven't got the . . . . Reach that bacon down.

Get the billies, Nell, an'—*Mary,*

Go an' fetch the . . . . Wot? '*Ow dare 'e!*

*Bill, yer NOT to wear yer best 'at inter town!*

Get up the cans, an'—Nell, go down the paddick with the  
 lunch;

There's that dog gone off with . . . . *Bill,* do 'urry on!

You must get to town in fas' time

Or you'll miss the train like las' time.

Oh, an' Bill, *if there's SOME EMPTYES* . . . . There, 'e's gone!

Now then, Mary, 'urry up, or . . . . Ow!

GOOD GAWD, LOOK AT THAT CALF!

TAKE IT FRUM 'IM, *or 'e'll chew it inter bits!*

You'd no right to leave it out there

With them calves and things about there.

'Eavens! wot a state! Dad's *best!* My, you'll get fits!

'Ave you washed the things, Matilder? Oh, do 'urry, girl,  
yer late!

Seems to me you trouble more—TAKE CARE!—*You dunce!*

Now you've broke it! Well I never!

Ain't chu mighty smart an' clever;

Try'n to carry arf a dozen things at once.

*No back answers now!* You hussy! Don't chu *dare* talk  
back at me

Or I'll . . . Nelly, did ju give them eggs to Bill?

*Wot?* CHU NEVER? Well I . . . Mary,

Bring them dishes frum the dairy;

No, not them, the . . . Lord, the sun's be'ind the hill!

All right, Dad, all right; don't worry. Now Matilder, good-  
ness, 'urry!

Where'd ju put that pie that's over? Wot? Which shelf?

Mary, wot about the tea things?

Must I alwis 'ave to see things

Managed proper? Can't chu 'tend to it yerself?

Where's that Bill? Wot! ain't 'e back yet? Did ju ever see  
the like?

Dad, ju'll 'ave to take an' talk to that young Turk.  
Ev'ry time 'e goes to town there,  
'E just stays an' loafes aroun' there;  
While 'e leaves us wimmin 'ere to slave an' work.

'Ave you cleaned the sepy-rater, Nell? Well, get along  
to bed.

No; you can't go 'crost to Thompson's place to-night;  
You wus there las' Chusday—See, miss,  
Don't chu toss your head at *me*, miss!  
I won't 'ave it. Mary, 'urry with that light!  
Now then, get yer Dad the paper. Set down, Dad—ju must  
be tired.  
'Ere, Matilder, put that almanick away!  
Where's them stockin's I wus darnin'?  
Bill an' Mary, stop yer yarnin'!  
Now then, Dad. Heigh-ho! Me fust sit down ter-day.

## Hopeful Hawkins

Hawkins wasn't in the swim at all in Dingo Flat,  
And to bait him was our chiefest form of bliss;  
But, in justice, be it said that he had a business head.  
(That's why I'm standing here and telling this.)

He was trav'ling for a company, insuring people's lives;  
And stayed about a month in Dingo Flat;  
But his biz was rather dull, and we took him for a gull,  
An amazing simple-minded one at that.

He was mad, he was, on mining and around about the town  
Prospected every reef. But worse than that—  
He'd talk for half a day, in a most annoying way,  
On "The mineral resources of the Flat."

He swore that somewhere nigh us was a rich gold-bearing  
reef,  
If a fellow only had the luck to strike it;  
And he only used to laugh when the boys began to chaff,  
And seemed, in fact, to rather sort of like it.



Well, we stood him for a month until he wellnigh drove us  
mad.

And as jeering couldn't penetrate his hide  
We fixed a little scheme for to dissipate his dream,  
And sicken him of mining till he died.

We got a likely-looking bit of quartz and faked it up  
With dabs of golden paint; then called him in.  
Oh, he went clean off his head; it was gold for sure, he said,  
And if we'd sell our claim he'd raise the tin.

But we weren't taking any—not at least till later on;  
For we reckoned that we'd string him on a while.  
When he wanted information of the reef's exact location  
We would meet him with a knowing sort of smile.

At last we dropped a hint that set him pegging out a claim,  
And we saw that we were coming in for sport;  
For the next account we heard was when Hawkins passed  
the word  
He was fetching up an expert to report.

When we heard that expert's verdict we were blown clean  
out of time,  
And absorbed the fact that we had fallen in.  
The gold, he said, would run 'bout four ounces to the ton;  
With traces, too, of copper, zinc and tin.

Old Hawkins he was jubilant, and up at Peter's store  
A lovely lot of specimens was showing;  
And we gazed at them and groaned, for the truth had to  
be owned:  
We had put him on a pile without our knowing.

We couldn't let the thing slip through our fingers, so to  
speak.  
There were thousands in the mine without a doubt.  
So me and Baker Brothers, and half a dozen others,  
We formed a syndicate to buy him out.

Well, he said he'd not the money to develop such a claim,  
And he'd sell it if we made a decent bid.  
So we made pretence at dealing, and it almost seemed like  
stealing  
When he parted, for five hundred lovely quid.

. . . . .  
We haven't seen the vendor in the Flat for nigh a week,  
And we're wishing, on the whole, he'd never come.  
The confounded mine's a duffer; for that simple-minded  
buffer  
He had salted it. The "expert" was a chum.

Hawkins wasn't reckoned much at all in Dingo Flat.

We'd a notion that his headpiece was amiss.

But we wish to have it stated, he was rather underrated.

(That's why I'm standing here and telling this.)

## Timberland

Tell you tales of pleasant cities, where processions never ending  
Throng the streets at morn and even, while the traffic screams  
and roars;

Where 'tis ever keen contriving,  
Each man with his neighbour striving;  
Where tall houses hang together, and there ain't no out-of-doors?

Sing you songs of crowds careering: days of rush and nights of  
clamour;  
Where there's ne'er a glimpse of greenwood to relieve the aching  
eyes.

Not for me their schemes nor pleasures;  
Not for me their modes nor measures—  
Give me life as strong men live it where the timber ranges rise.

*Where the timber-trucks come swinging down the curving  
hill-side track;*

*Where the splitter trudges singing with his weekly tucker  
pack;*

*Where the mountain ash is waving by the giant messmate  
tree—*

*'Spite the toiling, 'spite the slaving—that's the place where I  
would be.*

I can mock your traffic's roaring when the winds sweep through  
the forest;

When the stars shine o'er the tree-tops I can scorn your glaring  
lights.

    You may keep your slum and alley—

    When the sun sets in the valley

There's a scene I wouldn't barter for a wealth of city sights.

Tell me not of fame and fortune won through striving with your  
fellows,

Power of purse, and pride in scheming: these are things that I  
despise.

    Give me health and strength to labour;

    Give me peace and love of neighbour;

Give me joys that strong men cherish where the timber ranges  
rise.

*When the bushland dawn comes creeping, and the tree  
trunks catch the sun;*

*When the forest wakes from sleeping, and the day-long toil's  
begun,*



*Then content within us waxes, and we scorn the world's  
applause*

*'Mid the ringing of the axes and the droning of the saws.*

Let me tread with axe ashoulder where the track winds through  
the hazel.

What care I for tricks and fashions of the sheltered city street?

For we make no god of pleasure,

And we form no cult of leisure

In the land where big trees flourish, in the land where big hearts  
beat.

Let me feel the pride of striving where the timbers crash and  
splinter;

Strength of arm and steady courage are the qualities we prize.

Though we face our fortune gaily

Danger lurks beside us daily—

Oh, there's little room for weaklings where the timber ranges  
rise.

*When above the welcome shingles lazy smoke, all curling  
blue,*

*With the forest hazes mingles, and the long day's toil is  
through;*

*When across the little clearing children race with greeting  
cries—*

*No man asks for further cheering where the timber ranges  
rise?*

## Weary

Oh, I'm sick of the whole darned human race,  
And I'm sick of this earthly ball;  
I'm sick of the sight of my brother's face,  
And his works and talk and all;  
I'm sick of the silly sounds I hear,  
I'm sick of the sights I see;  
Omar Khayyam he knew good cheer,  
And it's much the same with me.

Give me a bit of a bough to sit  
Beneath, and a book of rhyme,  
And a cuddlesome girl that sings a bit,  
But don't sing all the time;  
That's all I ask, and it's only just;  
For it's all that I hold dear—  
A bough and a book and a girl and a crust;  
That, and a jug of beer.

Then I'll cuddle my girl and I'll quaff my ale  
As we sit on the leafy floor;  
And when the book and the beer jug fail,  
I'll cuddle my girl some more.  
For jugs give out and books get slow,  
But you take my tip for square—  
Though the bough and the book and the beer jug go,  
The girl, she's *always* there.

I'm sick of the sound of my fellows' voice;  
I'm sick of their schemes and shams;  
Of trying to choose when there ain't no choice,  
And of damning several damns;  
So, give me a girl that ain't too slow.  
You can keep your book of rhyme  
And your bough and bread and your beer. Wot O!  
And I'll cuddle her *all* the time.

## Hymn of Futility

Lord, Thou hast given unto us a land.  
In Thy beneficence Thou has ordained  
That we should hold a country great and grand,  
Such as no race of old has ever gained.  
A favoured people, basking in Thy smile:  
So dost Thou leave us to work out our fate;  
But, Lord, be patient yet a little while.  
The shade is pleasing and our task is great.

Lo, Thou hast said: "This land I give to you  
To be the cradle of a mighty race,  
Who shall take up the White Man's task anew,  
And all the nations of the world outpace.  
No heritage for cowards or for slaves,  
Here is a mission for the brave, the strong.  
Then see ye to it, lest dishonoured graves  
Bear witness that ye tarried overlong."

Lo, Thou hast said: "When ye have toiled and tilled,  
When ye have borne the heat, and wisely sown,  
And every corner of the vineyard filled  
With goodly growth, the land shall be your own.  
Then shall your sons and your sons' sons rejoice.  
Then shall the race speak with a conqueror's mouth;  
And all the world shall hearken to its voice,  
And heed the great White Nation of the South."

And Thou hast said: "This, striving, shall ye do.  
Be diligent to tend and guard the soil.  
If this great heritage I trust to you  
Be worth the purchase of a meed of toil,  
Then shall ye not, at call of game or mart,  
Forgo the labour of a single day.  
They spurn the gift who treasure but a part.  
Guard ye the whole, lest all be cast away.

"Say, is My bounty worth the winning?" (Lord,  
So hast Thou spoken. Humbly have we heard.)  
"No son of man is born who can afford  
To pay Me tribute with an empty word.  
Guard ye the treasure if the gift be meet.  
Win ye to strength and wisdom while ye may.  
For he who fears the burden and the heat  
Shall gain the wages of a squandered day."



Lord, we have heard . . . Loud our Hosannas rang!  
Voices of glad thanksgiving did we lift.  
From out the fullness of our hearts we sang  
Sweet hymns of praise for this Thy gracious gift.  
Here, in one corner of the land, we found  
A goodly garden where abundant food  
We won, with scanty labour, from the ground.  
Here did we rest. And, Lord, we found it good!

Great cities have we builded here, O Lord;  
And corn and kine full plenty for our need  
We have; and doth the wondrous land afford  
Treasure beyond the wildest dreams of greed.  
Even this tiny portion of Thy gift,  
One corner of our mighty continent,  
Doth please us well. A voice in prayer we lift:—  
*"Lord, give us peace! For we are well content."*

Lord, give us peace; for Thou has sent a sign:  
Smoke of a raider's ships athwart the sky!  
Nay, suffer us to hold this gift of Thine!  
The burden, Lord! The burden—by and by!  
The sun is hot, Lord, and the way is long!  
'Tis pleasant in this corner Thou hast blest.  
Leave us to tarry here with wine and song.  
Our little corner, Lord! Guard Thou the rest!

Why must we toil? Here is enough for all!  
To-morrow shall our sons take up the task.  
But, lest the cities of our people fall,  
Guard Thou our continent! 'Tis all we ask.  
To-morrow shall our sons go bravely forth,  
With banners, and in goodly armour decked.  
To-morrow shall they journey to the North,  
And do them penance for their sires' neglect.

But yesterday our fathers hither came,  
Rovers and strangers on a foreign strand.  
Must we, for their neglect, bear all the blame?  
Nay, Master, *we have come to love our land!*  
But see, the task Thou givest us is great;  
The load is heavy and the way is long!  
Hold Thou our enemy without the gate;  
When we have rested then shall we be strong.

Lord, Thou hast spoken . . . And, with hands to ears,  
We would shut out the thunder of Thy voice  
That in the nightwatch wakes our sudden fears—  
"The day is here, and yours must be the choice.  
Will ye be slaves and shun the task of men?  
Will ye be weak who may be brave and strong?"  
We wave our banners boastfully, and then,  
Weakly we answer, "Lord, the way is long!"

"Time tarries not, but here ye tarry yet,  
The futile masters of a continent,  
Guard ye the gift I gave? Do ye forget?"  
And still we answer, "Lord, we are content.  
Fat have we grown upon this goodly soil.  
A little while be patient, Lord, and wait.  
To-morrow and to-morrow will we toil.  
The shade is pleasing, Lord! Our task is great!"

But ever through the clamour of the mart,  
And ever on the playground through the cheers:  
"He spurns the gift who guardeth but a part"—  
So doth the warning fall on heedless ears.  
"Guard ye the treasure if the gift be meet"—  
(Loudly we call the odds, we cheer the play.)  
"For he who fears the burden and the heat  
Shall glean the harvest of a squandered day."

## A Song of Rain

Because a little vagrant wind veered south from China Sea;  
Or else, because a sun-spot stirred; and yet again, maybe  
Because some idle god in play breathed on an errant cloud,  
The heads of twice two million folk in gratitude are bowed.

*Patter, patter . . . Boolcoomatta,  
Adelaide and Oodnadatta,  
Pepegoona, parched and dry  
Laugh beneath a dripping sky.  
Riverina's thirsting plain  
Knows the benison of rain.  
Ararat and Arkaroola  
Render thanks with Tantanoola  
For the blessings they are gaining,  
And it's raining—raining—raining!*

Because a heaven-sent monsoon the mists before it drove;  
Because things happened in the moon; or else, because High Jove,  
Unbending, played at waterman to please a laughing boy,  
The hearts through all a continent are raised in grateful joy.

*Weeps the sky at Wipipipee  
Far Farina's folk are dippy  
With sheer joy, while Ballarat  
Shouts and flings aloft its hat.  
Thirsty Thackaringa yells;  
Taltabooka gladly tells  
Of a season wet and windy;  
Men rejoice on Murrindindie;  
Kalioota's ceased complaining;  
For it's raining—raining—raining!*

Because a poor bush parson prayed an altruistic prayer,  
Rich with unselfish fellow-love that Heaven counted rare;  
And yet, mayhap, because one night a meteor was hurled  
Across the everlasting blue, the luck was with our world.

*On the wilds of Winininnie  
Cattle low and horses whinny,  
Frolicking with sheer delight.  
From Beltana to The Bight,  
In the Mallee's sun-scorched towns,  
In the sheds on Darling Downs,  
In the huts at Yudnapinna,  
Tents on Tidnacoordininna,  
To the sky all heads are craning—  
For it's raining—raining—raining!*



Because some strange, cyclonic thing has happened—God knows  
where—

Men dream again of easy days, of cash to spend and spare.  
The ring fair Clara coveted, Belinda's furs are nigh,  
As clerkings watch their increments fall shining from the sky.

*Rolls the thunder at Eudunda;  
Leongatha, Boort, Kapunda  
Send a joyous message down;  
Sorrows, flooded, sink and drown.  
Ninkerloo and Nerim South  
Hail the breaking of the drouth;  
From Toolangi's wooded mountains  
Sounds the song of plashing fountains;  
Sovereign Summer's might is waning;  
It is raining—raining—raining!*

Because the breeze blew sou'-by-east across the China Sea;  
Or else, because the thing was willed through all eternity  
By gods that rule the rushing stars, or gods long æons dead,  
The earth is made to smile again, and living things are fed.

*Mile on mile from Mallacoota  
Runs the news, and far Baroota  
Speeds it over hill and plain,  
Till the slogan of the rain  
Rolls afar to Yankalilla;  
Wallaroo and Wirrawilla*

*Shout it o'er the leagues between,  
Telling of the dawning green.  
Frogs at Cocoroc are croaking,  
Booboorowie soil is soaking,  
Oodla Wirra, Orroroo  
Breathe relief and hope anew.  
Wycheproof and Wollongong  
Catch the burden of the song  
That is rolling, rolling ever  
O'er the plains of Never Never,  
Sounding in each mountain rill,  
Echoing from hill to hill . . .  
In the lonely, silent places  
Men lift up their glad, wet faces,  
And their thanks ask no explaining—  
It is raining—raining—raining!*

## The Bore

Ah, prithee, friend, if thou hast aught  
Of love and kind regard for me,  
Tell not yon bore the stories droll  
That yesternight I told to thee.

Nor tell him stories of thine own,  
Nor chestnut of antiquitee;  
Nor quip nor crank, nor anything  
If thou hast aught of love for me.

For sense of humour hath he none,  
No gift for telling tales hath he;  
Yet thinks himself, within his heart,  
A wit of wondrous drolleree.

And in the golden summer-time  
With ear a-cock he roameth free,  
Collecting quibble, quip, and crank;  
And anecdotes collecteth he.

## THE BORE

Then in the dreary winter nights  
He sits him down 'neath my roof-tree,  
And in a coarse, ungentle voice  
He fires those stories back at me.

He hath no wit for telling tales,  
He laughs where ne'er a point there be;  
But sits and murders honest yarns,  
And claims them as his propertee.

And when he laughs I rock and roar,  
And vow he'll be the death o' me.  
For, mark thou, friend, my martyrdom—  
He is a creditor to me.

Ay, prithee, friend, if thou hast love  
For goodly jests or care for me,  
Then tell him not the merry tale  
That yesternight I told to thee.

## The Cultured Constable

Five nights ago I lay at rest  
On my suburban couch.  
My trousers on the bedpost hung,  
Red gold within their pouch.  
The twin-gods Law and Order seemed  
To me all powerful as I dreamed.

My life was staid, my rates were paid,  
And peace was in my mind.  
Nor recked I of unruly men  
To evil deeds inclined—  
Strange, primal, atavistic men  
Who shock the peaceful citizen.

But all the same by stealth he came,  
A man of vile intent.  
What cared he that my life was pure,  
Or that I paid my rent?  
He willed to violate my shrine  
For household treasures that were mine.



With purpose vile and with a file  
My window he attacked.  
A stealthy scratch upon the catch  
Awoke me to the fact.  
Softly, with sudden fear amazed,  
A corner of the blind I raised.

I saw his face! . . . Oh, that a man  
His manhood should degrade,  
And seek to rob (I checked a sob)  
Except in honest trade!  
A predatory face I saw  
That showed no reverence for Law.

With whirring head I slid from bed,  
Crept from my peaceful couch;  
Forsook my trousers hanging there,  
Red gold within their pouch.  
Out through my chamber door I fled  
And up the hallway softly sped.

Into the murky night I stole  
To seek a certain cop,  
Whose forthright feet patrol the beat  
A stone's throw from my shop.  
In my pyjama suit went I. . . .  
Across the moon dark clouds swept by.

I saw him draped upon a post,  
Like someone in a swoon.  
His buttons gleamed what time the clouds  
Released the troubled moon.  
He gazed upon the changing sky,  
A strange light in his dreamy eye.

"Now, haste thee, cop!" I called aloud,  
And seized him by the arm.  
"There is a wretch without my house  
Who bodes my treasure harm." . . .  
Toward the sky he waved a hand  
And answered, "Ain't that background grand?"

"Nay, gentle John," said I, "attend.  
A thief my goods and gold  
Seeks to purloin. Go, seize the man  
Before the trail is cold!"  
"Those spires against the sky," said he,  
"Surcharged with beauty are to me."

"*I give the man in charge!*" I cried,  
"He is on evil bent!  
He seeks of all its treasured art  
To strip my tenement!"  
He answered, as one in a dream,  
"Ain't that a bonzer colour-scheme?"

"Them tortured clouds agen the moon,"  
The foolish cop pursued,  
"Remind me of some Whistler thing;  
But I prefer the nood."  
Said I, "Arrest this man of vice!"  
Said he, "The nood is *very* nice."

"My pants," cried I, "unguarded lie  
Beside my peaceful couch—  
My second-best pair, with the stripes,  
Red gold within their pouch!  
Thieves! Murder! *Burglars!* FIRE!" cried I.  
Sighed he, "Oh, spires against the sky!"

Then, in my pink pyjamas clad,  
I danced before his eyes.  
In anger impotent I sought  
His ear with savage cries.  
He pushed me from him with a moan.  
"Go 'way!" he said. "You're out of tone."

"Why do I pay my rates?" I yelled—  
"The wages that you draw!  
Come, I demand, good cop, *demand*  
Protection from the law!"  
"You're out of drorin', too," said he.  
"Still, s'pose I'd better go an' see."

I guided him a-down the street;  
And now he stayed to view  
The changing sky, and now he paused  
Before some aspect new.  
And thus, at length, we gained my gate.  
"Too late!" I cried. "Alas, too late!"

Too late to save my household gods,  
My treasures rich and rare.  
My ransacked cupboards yawned agape,  
My sideboard, too, was bare.  
And there, beside my tumbled couch,  
My trousers lay with rifled pouch.

"Now, haste thee, cop!" I called again,  
"Let not thy footsteps lag!  
The thief can not be far away.  
Haste to regain the swag!" . . .  
His arms I saw him outward fling.  
He moaned, "Where *did* you get that thing?"

With startled stare I looked to where  
His anguished gaze was bent,  
And, hanging by my wardrobe, saw  
A Christmas Supplement—  
A thing I'd got for little price  
And framed because I thought it nice.

It was a Coloured Supplement  
    (The frame, I thought, was neat).  
It showed a dog, a little maid—  
    Whose face was *very* sweet—  
A kitten, and some odds and ends.  
The title, rather apt, was "Friends."

"Accursed Philistine!" I heard  
    The strange policeman hiss  
Between his teeth. "O wretched man,  
    Was I lured here for this?  
O Goth! Suburbanite! Repent!  
*Tear down that Christmas Supplement!"*

And, as athwart my burgled pane  
    The tortured storm-wrack raced,  
That man of Coptic Culture grew  
    All limp and ashen-faced.  
Then to my window seat he crept,  
And bowed his head, and wept, and wept.



## My Poor Relation

I have a poor relation, but  
    He never troubles me.  
He's bowed with care; he wears an air  
    Of abject misery.  
Yet, I am happy to relate  
He never is importunate.

I meet him often in the street;  
    Sometimes he speaks with me;  
I know, indeed, he is in need—  
    That's *very* plain to see.  
Yet, though he is in want, I own  
He never asks me for a loan.

His cuffs are frayed around the edge;  
    His hat's a sight to see;  
His coat is torn; his pants are worn,  
    And baggy at the knee.  
Yet, though his need is manifest,  
He never brings me one request.

## MY POOR RELATION

I know he often wants for food,  
His tradesmen are unpaid,  
His life's accurst with one large thirst  
That never is allayed.  
Yet, ne'er by hint or sign does he  
Suggest that it is "up to me."

Is he too proud? Well, truly, no;  
To beg he's not ashamed.  
Yet, his neglect in that respect  
Is scarcely to be blamed.  
In fact he knows full well, you see,  
That I am just as poor as he.

## The Boon of Discontent

Once an anthropoidal ape,  
Hairy, savage, strange of shape,  
On a day that was excessively B.C.,  
In a forest damp and dim,  
With his tail around a limb,  
Hung head downward from a neolithic tree;  
And appeared to be lost in gloomy introspection.

In his dull, primeval style  
He considered quite a while—  
A comparatively thoughtful ape was he—  
Then he drummed upon his chest,  
And remarked: "I give it best!  
Strike me lucky! This 'ere game's no good to me!  
And I'm full up of the whole damn business!"

To the father of the tribe  
He proceeded to describe  
How upon a change of living he was bent.  
Said that Tory anthropoid:  
"Son, such thoughts you should avoid;  
They are obviously born of discontent.  
And such revolutionary notions would rend the whole  
social fabric."

*Since the Eocene,  
Till this Age of Biplanes,  
Man has ever been  
Yearning toward the high planes.  
And while the Tory lags behind in by-ways worn and  
narrow,  
'Tis the discontented section that shoves on the old world's  
barrow.*

Once a naked troglodyte,  
On a bitter winter's night,  
Sat and shivered in his cave the whole night through;  
For his scanty coat of hair  
In no manner could compare  
With the matted clothes his late forefather grew.  
(Meaning the meditative anthropoidal ape I mentioned  
previously.)

And the troglodyte remarked,  
As without a wild dog barked,  
And a dinosaurus lumbered through the fog,  
"I am sick of nakedness,  
And I'd like, I must confess,  
To be shielded in the clothing of a dog.  
And hang me if I don't go after one in the morning!"

He was met with scoffs and grins  
When he walked abroad in skins;  
And the troglodyte Conservatives cried: "Shame!  
Thus to hide the healthy nude  
Is obscene, indecent, rude!"  
But the malcontent felt warmer, all the same.  
And so began the evolution of the split skirt and the hot  
sock.

*From the Age of Stone,  
To these Days of Reason,  
Man has keener grown  
In and out of season.  
'Tis through being discontented that humanity progresses.  
If you're satisfied with dog-skins you will ne'er have satin  
dresses.*



Once upon a time, a slave  
Had an impulse to behave  
In a most unprecedented sort of style.  
He threw down his tools, and cried  
That he wasn't satisfied,  
And all slavery was barbarous and vile.  
(They probably boiled him in oil; but that's merely  
incidental.)

Once again, a man who rode  
In a coach disliked the mode  
Of that locomotion. 'Twas too slow by far.  
He was filled with discontent;  
So he—or some other—went  
And, in course of time, evolved the motor-car.  
And, if you've ever had one scare seven devils out of you,  
you'll know it for a very great invention.

So, observe, this discontent  
To mankind is wisely sent  
That he may be urged along to conquer new things,  
They who were quite satisfied,  
Like the Dinosaur, died,  
While the discontented anthropoids still do things.  
And continue to be discontented, of course; but that's all  
in the game.

*From the Age of Apes,  
To this generation,  
Mankind thus escapes  
Absolute stagnation.*

*Here's the only consolation my philosophy is giving:  
Discontentment with existence is your sole excuse for  
living.*

## Son of a Fool

*Gyved and chained in his father's home,  
He toiled 'neath a conqueror's rule;  
Bowed to the earth in the land of his birth:  
The Slave who was Son of a Fool.*

Poor remnant he of a conquered race,  
Long shorn of its power and pride,  
No reverence shone in his sullen face  
When they told how that race had died.  
But the meed that he gave to his father's name  
Was a down-drooped head and a flush of shame.

Oh, the Fool had reigned full many a year  
In the Land of the Bounteous Gifts,  
Dreaming and drifting, with never a fear,  
As a doomed fool pleasantly drifts;  
And he ate his fill of the gifts she gave—  
The Fool who was sire of a hopeless Slave.

Year by year as his harvest grew  
He gleaned with a lightsome heart;  
His barns he filled, and he sowed and tilled,  
Trading in port and mart.  
Proud of his prowess in sport and trade  
Was the Fool, who scoffed at an alien raid.

Little he recked of the gathering cloud  
That boded a swift disgrace.  
Was he not seed of a manly breed,  
Proud son of a warlike race?  
And he told of the deeds that his sires had done—  
While he wielded a bat in the place of a gun.

Small were his fears in the rich, fat years,  
Loud was his laugh of scorn  
When they whispered low of a watching foe,  
Greedy for gold and corn;  
A foe grown jealous of trade and power,  
Marking the treasure, and waiting the hour.

And, e'en when the smoke of the raiders' ships  
Trailed out o'er the northern skies,  
His laugh was loud: "Tis a summer cloud,"  
Said the Fool in his Paradise.  
And, to guard his honour, he gave a gun  
To the feeble hands of his younger son.

Oh, a startled Fool, and a Fool in haste  
Awoke on a later day,  
When they sped the word that a foe laid waste  
His ports by the smiling bay;  
And his voice was shrill as he bade his sons  
Haste out to the sound of the booming guns.

But scarce had he raised his rallying cry,  
Scarce had he called one note,  
When he died, as ever a fool must die,  
With his war-song still in his throat.  
And an open ditch was the hasty grave  
Of the Fool who fathered a hopeless Slave.

They point the moral, they tell the tale,  
And the old world wags its head:  
"If a Fool hath treasure, and Might prevail,  
Then the Fool must die," 'tis said.  
And the end of it all is a broken gun  
And the heritage gleaned by a hapless son.

*Gyved and chained in his father's home,  
He toiled 'neath a conqueror's rule;  
While they flung in his face the taunt of his race:  
A Slave and the Son of a Fool.*



## The Silent Member

He lived in Mundaloo, and Bill McClosky was his name,  
But folks that knew him well had little knowledge of that same;  
For he some'ow lost his surname, and he had so much to say—  
He was called "The Silent Member" in a mild, sarcastic way.

He could talk on any subject—from the weather and the crops  
To astronomy and Euclid, and he never minded stops;  
And the lack of a companion didn't lay him on the shelf,  
For he'd stand before a looking-glass and argue with himself.

He would talk for hours on lit'rature, or calves, or art, or wheat;  
There was not a bally subject you could say had got him beat;  
And when strangers brought up topics that they reckoned he  
would baulk,  
He'd remark, "I never heard of that." But all the same—he'd  
talk.

He'd talk at christ'nings by the yard; at weddings by the mile;  
And he used to pride himself upon his choice of words and style.  
In a funeral procession his remarks would never end  
On the qualities and virtues of the dear departed friend.

We got quite used to hearing him, and no one seemed to care—  
In fact, no happ'ning seemed complete unless his voice was there.  
For close on thirty year he talked, and none could talk him down,  
Until one day an agent for insurance struck the town.

Well, we knew The Silent Member, and we knew what he could  
do,

And it wasn't very long before we knew the agent, too,  
As a crack long-distance talker that was pretty hard to catch;  
So we called a hasty meeting and decided on a match.

Of course, we didn't tell them we were putting up the game;  
But we fixed it up between us, and made bets upon the same.  
We named a time-keep and a referee to see it through;  
Then strolled around, just casual, and introduced the two.

The agent got first off the mark, while our man stood and  
grinned;

He talked for just one solid hour, then stopped to get his wind.  
"Yes; but—" sez Bill; that's all he said; he couldn't say no more;  
The agent got right in again, and fairly held the floor.

On policies, and bonuses, and premiums, and all that,  
He talked and talked until we thought he had our man out flat.  
"I think—" Bill got in edgeways, but that there insurance chap  
Just filled himself with atmosphere, and took the second lap.

I saw our man was getting dazed, and sort of hypnotized,  
And they oughter pulled the agent up right there, as I advised.  
"See here—" Bill started, husky; but the agent came again,  
And talked right on for four hours good—from six o'clock to ten.

Then Bill began to crumple up, and weaken at the knees,  
When all at once he ups and shouts, "Here, give a bloke a breeze!  
Just take 'a pull for half a tick and let me have the floor,  
And I'll take out a policy," The agent said no more.

The Silent Member swallowed hard, then coughed and cleared  
his throat,  
But not a single word would come—no; not a blessed note.  
His face looked something dreadful—such a look of pained  
dismay;  
Then he gave us one pathetic glance, and turned, and walked  
away.

He's hardly spoken since that day—not more than "Yes" or  
"No."

We miss his voice a good bit, too; the town seems rather slow.  
He was called "The Silent Member" just sarcastic, I'll allow;  
But since that agent handled him it sort o' fits him now.

## Cow

Aw, go write your tinklin' jingle, an' your pretty phrases mingle,  
For the namby-pamby girl, all fluffy frill an' shinin' silk.  
That's the sort to bring you trouble when you tries 'em in the  
double.

Blow your beauty! *Wot's the matter with the maiden 'oo can  
milk?*

Them there rhymers of the wattle! An' the bardlet of the bottle—  
'Im that sings of sparklin' wine, an' does a perish for the beer;  
An' your slap-dash 'orsey poet! Why, if you blokes only know it,  
You 'ave missed the only subject fit to rhyme about down 'ere.  
An' although I ain't a poet with the bays upon my brow,  
I consider that it's up to me to sing about The Cow.

Cow, Cow—

(Though it ain't a pretty row.

It's a word that 'ipnotises me; I couldn't tell you how.)

Though I ain't a gifted rhymers,

Nor a blamed Parnassus climber,

I'm inspired to sing a time er two about the Blessed Cow.

Oh, the cow-bells are a-tinklin', and the daisies are a twinklin'—

*Well, that ain't the style exactly I intended for to sing.*

'Ark, was ever music greater than the buzzin' sepyrater,

Coinin' gaily money daily for the—*no, that's not the thing!*

'Omeward come the cows a-lowin', an' the buttercups are blowin';

But there's better butter in the—*Blarst! That ain't the proper way!*

See the pretty milkmaid walkin'—aw, but what's the use of talkin'?

Listen 'ere, I want to tell you this: A COW'S THE THING TO PAY!

Sell your 'orses, sell your 'arrers, an' your reapers, an' your plough;

If you want your land to pay you, sacrifice your life to Cow.

Cow, Cow—

Sittin' underneath the bough,

With a bail, an' with a pail, an' with a little stool, an' thou

Kickin' when I pull your teat or

Swishin' flies, my pretty creatur.

Ah, there ain't no music sweeter—money squirtin' from the Cow.

Listen to the lowin' cattle. Listen to the buckets' rattle,

See, the sun is—('ERE! YOU BILL! D'you mean to stay all day asleep?



'Ustle, or you'll get a taste er—Wot? No cheek, you flamin' waster!

This is wot I get for payin' 'ARF A QUID A WEEK AND KEEP!  
Talk about your Unions, will you? Right, my covey, wait until you

Come 'ere crawlin'—WHERE'S THAT SARAH? Ain't she finished milkin' Spot?

Is this wot I brought you up for; reared, an' give you bite an' sup for?

'Struth! A man's own kids'll next be talkin' Union, like as not!  
Garn, I ain't got time to listen to your silly sniv'lin' now.  
Understan' me, you was born an' bred to THINK AN' LIVE FOR  
Cow!)

Cow, Cow—

I'm a capitalist now:

Though I once was poor an' lonely, an' a waster, I'll allow.

Now I've 'ands that I can hector:

I'm an Upper 'Ouse elector;

An' the Sanit'ry Inspector is an interferin' cow!

Talk about your modern schoolin'! Education's wasteful foolin'!

I got on all right without it—only teaches youngsters cheek—  
(Where's young Tom? Wot? Ain't 'e back yet? Sam, go—

'Ere! YOU'LL GET THE SACK YET!

Wastin' time there, washin' buckets! THEM WUS WASHED  
LAST TUESDAY WEEK!

Tell young Tom if 'e don't 'urry, I'll——. Now, mother, don't you worry.

I'll deal Christian with 'im; but I'm not a Bible pa by 'alf.  
That old Scripture cove was driv'llin'; when 'is prodigal come  
sniv'lin',

Why, the blazin', wasteful crim'nal GOES AN' KILLS A PODDY  
CALF!

I'm no dotin' daddy, but I know my duty, you'll allow,  
An' the children of my loins is bound to 'ave respect for Cow.)

Cow, Cow—

Bow your 'eads, you blighters, bow!

Come an' be initiated. Come an' take the milky vow.

Put your wife an' fam'ly in it;

Work 'em ev'ry wakin' minit;

Fetch your sordid soul an' pin it, signed an' sealed an' sold to  
COW.

## The High Priest

Nay, why do foolish politicians strive  
To win a fleeting popularity?  
In vain, in vain, they jealously contrive  
To turn the doting Public Eye from Me.  
What was this land, this nation, destined for?  
For Art, Trade, Politics? All out of place.  
Behold, I am the Sporting Editor!  
I call the race!

Reviewers, leader writers—what are they?  
Subs, poets, novelists? Scribes of a sort—  
Mere puny scribbling creatures of a day;  
While I, the people's idol, stand for SPORT!  
For mark, when inspiration falls on me,  
What recks the public of that nameless band?  
I ope my lips, and wisdom, gushing free,  
O'erflows the land.

I lift my voice, and, lo, an army wakes—  
A mighty host, a hundred thousand strong—  
To spread the message; while the nation quakes  
And thunders with the burden of my song:  
*"Ten lengths from home Grey Lad outstripped The Witch,  
And passed the post, by just a short neck, first."*  
These are the words, the pregnant words, for which  
The land's athirst.

They are the children of my brain, mine own!—  
These mighty words for which the people yearn;  
The product of *my* genius alone!  
Would you begrudge the laurels that I earn?  
Mark you, yon sturdy native, strong o' limb,  
That leans against the lamp-post o'er the way—  
Approach, and learn of my great fame from him.  
Approach, and say:—

"Awake! Arise! A curse on him who waits!  
Behold, young man, thy country needs thy like;  
The foeman's hordes are panting at our gates.  
Arouse, young patriot, go forth and strike!  
Awake, and cast thy reeking fag away!  
Arise, and take the white man's burden up!"  
I'll lay you ten to one in quids he'll say:  
"Wot's won the Cup?"

Behold, the High Priest of the people's creed!

Proclaim his genius loud. The bays! The bays!

Come, crown the Sporting Editor—indeed,

He is quite intimate with bays—and grays.

*"Ten lengths from home!"* How exquisite. How chaste!

*"Gray Lad outstripped The Witch!"* What style!

What grace!

Come, Beauty, twine a laurel wreath! Nay, haste!

He calls the race!



## The Philistine

Smith is a very stupid man;  
He lives next door to me;  
He has no settled scheme or plan  
Of domesticity.  
He does not own a gramophone,  
Nor rush for morning trains;  
His garden paths are overgrown,  
He seldom entertains.

In all our staid suburban street  
He strikes the one false note.  
He goes about in slippered feet,  
And seldom wears a coat.  
I don't know how he earns his bread;  
'Tis said he paints or writes;  
And frequently, I've heard it said,  
He works quite late at nights.

She's quite a pretty girl, his wife.  
Our women-folk declare  
It is a shame she spoiled her life  
By wedding such a bear.  
And yet she seems quite satisfied  
With this peculiar man;  
And says, with rather foolish pride,  
He is Bohemian.

He will not join our tennis club,  
Nor come to may'ral balls,  
Nor meet the neighbours in a rub  
At bridge, nor pay them calls.  
He just delights to scoff and sneer,  
And feigns to be amused  
At everything we hold most dear—  
What wonder he's abused?

Although he's ostracized a deal  
He never makes a fuss;  
I sometimes think he seems to feel  
*He ostracizes us!*  
But that, of course, is quite absurd;  
And, risking the disgrace,  
I sometimes say a kindly word  
When I pass by his place.

But still, although one likes to keep  
One's self a bit select,  
And not be, so to speak, too cheap,  
I'm broad in that respect.  
So oft, on sultry summer eves,  
I waive all diffidence,  
And chat across the wilted leaves  
That garb our garden fence.

But, oh, his talk is so absurd!  
His notions are so crude.  
Such drivél I have seldom heard;  
His mode of speech is rude.  
He mentions "stomach" in a bark  
You'd hear across the street.  
He lacks those little ways that mark  
A gentleman discreet.

Good books he seldom seems to read;  
In Art all taste he lacks.  
To Slopham's works he pays no heed;  
He scorns my almanacks—  
Framed almanacks! It's simply rot  
To hear the fellow prate  
About Velasquez, Villon, Scott,  
And such folk out of date.

He lacks all soul for music, too;  
He hates the gramophone;  
And when we play some dance-tune new  
I've often heard him groan.  
He says our music gives him sad,  
Sad thoughts of slaughtered things.  
I think Smith is a little mad;  
Nice thoughts to me it brings.

Now, I have quite a kindly heart;  
Good works I do not stint;  
Last week I spoke to Smith apart,  
And dropped a gentle hint.  
He will be snubbed, I told him flat,  
By neighbours round about,  
Unless he wears a better hat  
On Sundays, when he's out.

Last Sunday morn he passed my place  
About the hour of four;  
A smile serene was on his face,  
And rakishly he wore  
A most dilapidated hat  
Upon his shameless head.  
"This ought to keep 'em off the mat,"  
He yelled. *I cut him dead.*

## Work or Reflection

Now, I always have preserved a certain attitude

Quite definite in reference to Work—

('Tis futility concealing

That I have the Weary Feeling

And tendency perennial to shirk)—

Still, I always strive to recognize the principle

That earnest, steady toil is ever best ;

So that, having recognized it,

Not to say idealized it,

I would fain lay down my pen and take a rest.

For, you understand, to recognize a principle

Is patently a virtue in itself.

After that you have the option,

Of its strenuous adoption,

Or the placing of it gently on a shelf.

For myself, I'm forced to own that though my theory's

A thing of beauty, even in the rough,

Dearth of cash supplies good reasons,

With the passing of the seasons,

That this simple recognition's not enough.



*For it's Work—Toil—Graft—*

*It's accomplishment that matters in the end;  
And the act of recognition,  
Even by a politician,*

*Has not ever yet been known to make or mend.  
And the man who holds a lamp-post up without much  
fret or fuss,  
He may "recognize a principle" and feel quite  
virtuous.*

We have read about the lives, in ancient history,  
Of the Doers back in every age and clime;  
And their method of reforming  
Was reflecting *and* performing,  
More especially the latter, every time.  
But the man who sat and recognized the principles,  
And calmly left accomplishment to Fate.  
May have won a reputation,  
As a saviour of the nation,  
But his name has been suppressed, at any rate.

This has clearly been the rule since far antiquity:  
Before a thing is done a man must act;  
And all progress lay in knowing  
What to do, and straightway going  
And just *working* till reform became a fact.

But to stand on distant nodding terms with principle  
Has been a most unprofitable trick.  
You may scan historic pages,  
And right down throughout the ages  
Mere reflection never laid a single brick.

*For it's Graft—Toil—Work,  
It's performance that is needed in the land.  
Recognition by the student  
Of the principle is prudent,  
But it never yet has shifted any sand.  
And Hell is full of futile folk who scorned the verb  
to do,  
Who "recognized the principle" but failed to see it  
through.*

## The March

In early, prehistoric days, before the reign of Man,  
When neolithic Nature fashioned things upon a plan  
That was large as it was rugged, and, in truth, a trifle crude,  
There arose a dusky human who was positively rude.

Now, this was in the days when lived the monster kangaroo;  
When the mammoth bunyip gambolled in the hills of Beetaloo;  
They'd owned the land for centuries, and counted it their own;  
For might was right, and such a thing as "law" was quite  
unknown.

But this dusky old reformer in the ages long ago,  
One morning in the Eocene discovered how to "throw";  
He studied well and practised hard until he'd learned the art;  
Then, having planned his Great Campaign, went forth to make  
a start.

"See here," he said—and hurled a piece of tertiary rock,  
That struck a Tory bunyip with a most unpleasant shock—  
"See here, my name is *Progress*, and your methods are too slow;  
This land that you are fooling with *must be cut up*. Now go!"

They gazed at him in wonder, then they slowly backed away;  
For "throwing" things was novel in that neolithic day;  
'Twas the prehistoric "argument," the first faint gleam of "art,"  
Yet those mammoths seemed to take it in exceedingly bad part.

Then a hoary, agéd bunyip rose, and spluttered loud and long;  
He said the black man's arguments were very, *very* wrong.  
"You forget," he said, indignantly, "the land is ours by *right*,  
And to seek to wrest it from us would be—well, most impolite."

But the savage shook his woolly head and smiled a savage smile,  
And went on hurling prehistoric missiles all the while,  
Till the bunyip and the others couldn't bear the argument,  
And they said, "Why, this is robbery!" But, all the same—they  
went.

Some centuries—or, maybe, it was æons—later on,  
When the bunyip and the mammoth kangaroo had passed and  
gone;

While the black man slowly profited by what his fathers saw,  
While he learned to fashion weapons and establish tribal law,

There came a band of pale-faced men in ships, from oversea,  
Who viewed the land, then shook their heads and sadly said,  
"Dear me!"

Then they landed rum and school books, and a trusty gun or two,  
And started out to "civilize," as whites are apt to do.

They interviewed the black man and remarked, "It's very sad,  
But the use you make of this great land is positively bad;  
Why, you haven't got a sheep or cow about the blessed place!  
Considering the price of wool, it's simply a disgrace."

Then they started with the school books and the rum—likewise  
the guns;

And some began to look for gold and others "took up runs."  
For, they said, "This land *must be cut up*; it's simply useless so;  
Our name is *Progress*, and you're out of date, so you must go!"

But the black was most indignant, and he said it was a shame;  
For *he'd* been full and satisfied before the white man came,  
And he used a word unpublishable in his argument,—  
Which was native for "A blanky Buccaneer." And yet—*he* went.

It's the same old "march unceasing." We are getting down the  
list,  
And yesterday's "Reformer" is to-day's "Monopolist,"  
For history *will* repeat itself in this annoying way:  
Who stood for "Progress" yesterday is "Retrograde" to-day.



## The Little Homes

We have heard the cheering, brothers,  
We have heard the martial peal;  
We have seen the soldiers marching  
And the glint of sun on steel.  
We have heard the songs, the shouting;  
But, while forth the soldier roams,  
Who has heard the weeping, brothers,  
In the Little Homes?

We have seen the gay processions  
And the careless, laughing crowds;  
We have seen the banners waving  
Out against the peaceful clouds;  
Yet, while colours proudly flutter  
Over noble spires and domes,  
Who has seen the mourning, brothers,  
In the Little Homes?

## THE LITTLE HOMES

From the Little Homes that nestle  
Where the smiling fields sweep wide,  
From the Little Homes that huddle  
In the city, side by side,  
They have called the eager fighters—  
Men who went with smiles and cheers;  
Pride of wives and pride of mothers—  
Pride that conquers fears.

What the Little Homes shall suffer,  
What the Little Homes shall pay  
Must be more than sturdy fighters,  
More than women's grief to-day.  
In the years that follow after,  
Be our battles won or lost,  
In the Little Homes, my brothers,  
They shall pay the cost.

They shall pay the cost of glory,  
They shall pay the price of peace,  
Years and many long years after  
All the sounds of battle cease.  
When the sword is sheathed—or broken—  
When the battle-flag is furled,  
Still the Little Homes must suffer  
Over all the World.

Have you seen the old grey mothers  
Smiling to the ringing cheers?  
Have you seen the young wives striving  
Bravely to hold back the tears?  
Have you seen the young girl marching  
By her soldier-lover's side?  
Have you seen our country's women  
All aglow with pride?

Women of the little homesteads,  
Women of the city slums,  
They are waiting, ever waiting;  
And the sound of muffled drums  
In some stricken Home is echoed,  
Where grey Grief is guest to-day.  
And to-morrow? Nay, the others  
Still must wait—and pray.

Then, shall we think shame, my brothers,  
To give thanks upon our knees  
That the land we love should hold them—  
Wives and mothers such as these?  
Women who still hide their sorrow  
As their soldiers march away,  
Turning brave and steadfast faces  
To the light of day?

## THE LITTLE HOMES

Oh, the Little Homes are cheerful—  
Little Homes that know no pride  
But the pride of sacrificing  
Loved ones to the battle tide!  
They are many, many, brothers,  
And their sacrifice is great,  
Shrines are they and sacred places,  
Where the women wait.

Aye, the Little Homes are holy  
At the darkening of day,  
When young wives must face their sorrow,  
When grey mothers kneel to pray,  
Magnifying, in dread visions,  
Danger where the soldier roams,  
Then God heed the lonely sobbing,  
In the Little Homes.

## The Bridge Across the Crick

Joseph Jones and Peter Dawking  
Strove in an election fight;  
And you'd think, to hear them talking,  
Each upheld the people's right.  
Each declared he stood for Progress and against his country's  
foes  
When he sought their votes at Wombat, where the Muddy  
River flows.

Peter Dawking, scorning party,  
As an Independent ran;  
Joseph Jones, loud, blatant, hearty,  
Was a solid party man.  
But the electors up at Wombat vowed to him alone they'd  
stick  
Who would give his sacred promise for the "bridge across  
the crick."



Bland, unfaithful politicians  
Long had said this bridge should be.  
Some soared on to high positions,  
Some sank to obscurity;  
Still the bridge had been denied it by its unrelenting foes—  
By the foes of patient Wombat, where the Muddy River  
flows.

Up at Wombat Peter Dawking  
Held a meeting in the hall,  
And he'd spent an hour in talking  
On the far-flung Empire's Call,  
When a local greybeard, rising, smote him with this verbal  
brick:  
"Are or are yeh not in favour of the bridge across the crick?"

Peter just ignored the question,  
Proudly patriotic man;  
Understand a mean suggestion  
Men like Peter never can,  
Or that free enlightened voters look on all Great Things  
as rot,  
While a Burning Local Question fires each local patriot.

Joseph Jones, serene and smiling,  
Took all Wombat to his heart.  
"Ah," he said, his "blood was b'iling"—  
He declared it "made him smart"  
To reflect how they'd been swindled; and he cried in thrilling  
tones:  
"Gentlemen, your bridge is certain if you cast your votes for  
Jones!"

Joseph Jones and Peter Dawking  
Strove in an election fight,  
And, when they had finished talking,  
On the great election night  
They stood level in the voting, and the hope of friends and  
foes  
Hung upon the box from Wombat, where the Muddy River  
flows.

Then the Wombat votes were counted;  
Jones, two hundred; Dawking, three!  
Joseph, proud and smiling, mounted  
On a public balcony,  
And his friends were shrill with triumph, for that contest,  
shrewdly run,  
In the House gave Jones's Party a majority of one.

Jones's Party—note the sequel—  
Rules that country of the Free,  
And the fight, so nearly equal,  
Swayed the whole land's destiny.  
And the Big Things of the Nation are delayed till Hope  
grows sick—  
Offered up as sacrifices to "the bridge across the crick."

Dawking now is sadly fearing  
For the crowd's intelligence.  
Joseph, skilled in engineering,  
Full of pomp and sly pretence,  
Still holds out the pleasing promise of that bridge whene'er  
he goes  
Up to Wombat, patient Wombat, where the Muddy River  
flows.

## K'shoo

(A Rhybe wridded for *The Gadfly*)

Whed your dose is code as barble,  
Ad you sduffle all the day,  
Ad your head id is behavig  
Id a bost udbleased way;  
Whed your ev'ry joid is achig  
With a very paidful cramb,  
Whed your throad is dry ad tiglish,  
Ad your feed are code ad damb;  
Whed your eyes are red ad rudding  
With the dears thad will cub oud;  
You cad safely bake your bind ub  
There is very liddle doubd.

You've got a code—a code—  
Ad idfluedzal code;  
You cahd tell how you caught id,  
But id's got a good firb hode.  
Your face is whide, your eyes are pigk,  
Your dose is red ad blue;  
Ad you wish thad you were—  
Ah—Ah—Ah—h—Kish—SHOO-O-O!

I dode wad to be a boed,  
Ad I do nod log for fabe,  
Bud I have to wride to get by bread  
Ad budder, all the sabe.  
Id is very aggravadig,  
Ad this world is very hard  
Whed the idfluenza fasteds  
Od a sendibendal bard.  
Oh, I caddod sig of subber skies!  
I caddod twag by lyre!  
For all the buses id the world  
Are powerless to idspire.

I've got a code—a code—  
A bost udpleased code;  
I caddod sig a sog ob sprig,  
I caddod bake ad ode.  
For inspirashud will nod cub;  
I'b feelig very blue;  
Oh, would thad I was—  
Ah—  
Ah—  
Ah—h—  
Kish—SHOO-O-O!



I have to wride adother verse,  
Ad dode doe whad to say;  
But I've got to buy some bedicid  
To drive this code away;  
Oh, the boed's is a hard, hard life,  
His lod is very sore;  
Ad if bisfortune cubs to hib,  
He has to toil the bore.  
And dow, I thig I've bade enough,  
By wridig this last verse,  
To go ad buy byself sub stuff  
Before by code geds worse.

I've got a code—a code—  
Ad aggravadig code!  
If I was well I'd wride you such  
A charbig liddle ode.  
I'd sig of labkids od the sward,  
Bedeath the skies so blue,  
If it wasn'd for the  
Ah—  
Ah—  
Ah—h—  
Kish— SH0000!

## Vulgar Fractions

*Now, when Bill, the pick and shovel man, or Archibald, the clerk,  
Undertakes to sell the labour of a day,  
Then, for certain hours he works between the dawning and the  
dark,  
And delivers one day's work for one day's pay.  
This industrial arrangement has advantages for both,  
If employer and employed are honest men.  
And to doubt its simple justice I would be extremely loth;  
For no sophistry shall e'er pollute my pen.*

In referring to this matter I assume you have a taste  
For the stuff that sporting blokes regard as rot,  
Such as politics, arithmetic and economic waste.  
(You're excused from reading farther if you've not.)  
But arithmetic is boring to a certain type of man  
Who is loth to strain his intellect too far. . . .  
Which reminds me, opportunely, of the modern Party Plan  
And the story of T. Trimmer, M.H.R.

As a lad young Thomas Trimmer longed to serve the Common-  
weal;

To devote to great reforms his manhood's prime.

Oh, he yearned to serve his country with a patriotic zeal;

And proposed to give the matter his whole time.

You will note the youthful ardour—His *whole time*, he said, no  
less.

His *WHOLE* time! No task or trouble would he shun.

(We shall call this "whole" a unit to avoid untidiness;

And to represent it use the figure "1.")

Therefore "1" denotes the labour that young Trimmer meant to  
give

To his country as a maker of its laws.

But he saw that if in politics he ever meant to live

It was wisdom to espouse some Party cause.

Wherefore, Thomas joined a Party and became a Party Man;

He secured the nomination later on,

And he won in the election when he subsequently ran.

Which was excellent—so far as he had gone.

Now, when Thomas entered Parliament he found that half his  
job

Was to keep himself before the public eye;

And he had to make good running with the fickle-minded mob

Lest his Party should disown him by and by.

Thus we have a simple problem in subtraction, you will note:

$1 - \frac{1}{2}$  must  $= \frac{1}{2}$  'tis plain.

But half his time to noble aims could Trimmer still devote,

And so, we have small reason to complain.

But, what with Party meetings and no-confidence debates,

He depleted this small  $\frac{1}{2}$  by just  $\frac{2}{3}$ ;

Which was occupied in fanning Party jealousies and hates

With redundant and unprofitable words.

Thus the first  $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3}$  must give  $\frac{5}{6}$  in answer; so,

When  $\frac{5}{6}$  is given to the Party cause,

Of the whole there must remain, as any simpleton should know,

Just  $\frac{1}{6}$  to spend in framing splendid laws.

But  $\frac{1}{6}$  of any busy politician's working day

Is as much as any country should expect;

Yet Thomas found that, as the Party game he had to play,

There were other matters he could not neglect.

Organizing, engineering, and a dozen other things,

Of the  $\frac{1}{6}$  remaining, claimed at least  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,

And a simple calculation to  $\frac{1}{6}$  the answer brings—

Which, to quote the famous Euclid, is absurd.

Yet, one whole ninth of Trimmer's time the grateful country  
gained,

Till he chanced to get unhappily involved

In a private row that claimed  $\frac{10}{17}$  of what remained . . .

But I think we'll let this problem go unsolved—  
Not because I couldn't do it!—(Mathematics, I may say,  
Are my hobby)—but for purposes of rhyme.  
From the ninth you merely have to take ten seventeenths away,  
And—well, you can work it out when you have time.

If you then deduct  $\frac{3}{7}$  of the answer, in the end  
You will strike the final fraction—more or less—  
For a fairly large proportion of his time he had to spend  
Keeping solid with the watchful Party Press.  
And, of course, there were occasions when the whole thing made  
him sick;  
And we might deduct  $\frac{1}{16}$  for that, no doubt.  
It's an entertaining problem, if you like arithmetic;  
And I trust you'll find the time to work it out.

I advise you to attempt it; for the simple sum I've set  
Is a task an earnest student shouldn't shirk;  
And the answer is the portion that the glad electors get  
Of a busy Party politician's work.  
Trimmer ceased his calculations when the vulgar fractions failed,  
And he had to take to decimals instead.  
So, although his young resolve to serve the land has not prevailed,  
He's "a solid Party man" I've heard it said.



Well, the plenitude of politicians in our native land  
 Is a matter frequently remarked upon;  
 But, assuming you're intelligent, the cause you'll understand  
 If you've followed me as far as I have gone.  
 Let us make the fraction lib'ral: if  $\frac{1}{20}$  we'll say,  
 Of a "statesman's" day is ours, 'tis plain to see  
 That it takes just twenty "statesmen" to put in one working day  
 For the country. (Still more Euclid)—Q.E.D.

I commend your patience, brother, if you've followed me thus far;  
 And, in metaphor, I pat you on the back.  
 Let me add, in peroration, that T. Trimmer, M.H.R.  
 Is quite typical of any Party hack.  
 Then perhaps you'll do some thinking when you hear a wordy  
 storm  
 Of objection from the "solid Party man,"  
 When the theme's Elected Ministries and similar reform:  
 "YOU CAN NEVER, NEVER CHANGE THE PARTY PLAN!"

*For, when Bill, the pick and shovel man, or Archibald, the clerk,  
 Sells his labour for a week at sixty bob,  
 Then he doesn't waste his boss's time and money like a nark  
 In attempts to do the foreman for his job.  
 This industrial arrangement—so much work for so much pay—  
 Seems to suit the ordinary working man;  
 And we've yet to see the office or the workshop of to-day  
 Working smoothly on the "Good Old Party Plan."*

## The Minglers

I hold by stern morality,  
Despite the worldlings' scoffing;  
But when I sit beside the sea  
And gaze into the offing  
The bathers, mingling on the beach,  
Stir thoughts I cannot put in speech.

Indeed, my sad soul loathes a sight  
So ill to minds ascetic;  
Yet from the narrow path of right  
I feel a tug magnetic  
That seeks to draw me o'er the sand,  
Out to the siren-haunted strand.

"Come, mingle," sings the restless sea.  
This urging sorely vexes.  
E'en fish, when caught and tinned, may be  
Unwed and mixed in sexes.  
But who has heard of potted sin,  
Or found temptation in a tin?

## THE MINGLERS

Hark, by the seaside yester eve  
I had a wondrous vision.  
The sun was just about to leave  
With his well-known precision,  
When I espied upon the sand  
A tin of a familiar brand.

And, as I gazed, my limbs grew limp  
And giddiness came o'er me;  
For from it stepped a fish-like imp  
That smirked and bowed before me;  
His puckered features seemed to be  
Awry with spite and devilry.

"Young man," he said, "You're wasting time.  
Why do you sit there mooning?  
So brave a youth, just in his prime,  
Should find more joy in spooning.  
For, see! the ocean hath its pearls;  
Go forth and mingle with the girls!"

And from the tins that lay about  
Upon the silver shingle  
I heard a wee shrill chorus shout,  
"Young man, go forth and mingle!"  
And then I knew each empty tin  
Concealed its special imp within.

I felt the red blood course anew,

I felt my pulses tingle;

And still the tiny chorus grew;

*"Young man, go forth and mingle!"*. . . .

Then, from an old, bashed can I saw

A lordly lobster wave a claw.

"Good fellow, have a care!" he said,

"Stray not from pathways upper!

I am the ghost of one long dead,

Slain for a sinful supper.

But once good works were done by me

Among the sinners of the sea.

"In life I roamed the vasty deep

Engaged upon a mission,

Which was my fellow-fish to keep

From swimming to perdition.

Now I am dead" (his voice grew thin),

"Alas! they mingle in the tin!

"Beware the blood that bounds and leaps!

Your sinful feelings throttle.

Beware the imp that leers and peeps

From out each tin and bottle!

A submarine reformer speaks.

*Beware* when gay Belinda squeaks!"

Lo, as he spoke my blood grew chill,  
The spell no longer bound me,  
The impish chorus now was still  
And silence reigned around me.  
The ghostly lobster disappeared;  
My heart of base desire was cleared.

But, to this day, I feel a thrill  
'Mid tins upon the shingle;  
I seem to hear that chorus shrill:  
    *"Young man, go forth and mingle!"*. . . .  
But then I hear the lobster's voice,  
And, knowing I am saved, rejoice.



## The Austral—aise

Fellers of Australier,  
Blokes an' coves an' coots,  
Shift yer — carcases,  
Move yer — boots.  
Gird yer — loins up,  
Get yer — gun,  
Set the — enemy  
An' watch the — run.

### *Chorus:*

*Get a — move on,  
Have some — sense.  
Learn the — art of  
Self de- — -fence.*

Have some — brains be-  
Neath yer — lids.  
An' swing a — sabre  
Fer the missus an' the kids.

## THE AUSTRAL—AISE

Chuck supportin' — posts,  
An' strikin' — lights,  
Support a — fam'ly an'  
Strike fer yer — rights.

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move, etc.*

Joy is — fleetin',  
Life is — short.  
Wot's the use uv wastin' it  
All on — sport?  
Hitch yer — tip-dray  
To a — star.  
Let yer — watchword be  
"Australi- — -ar!"

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move, etc.*

'Ow's the — nation  
Goin' to ixpand  
'Lest us — blokes an' coves  
Lend a — 'and?

'Eave yer — apathy  
Down a — chasm;  
'Ump yer — burden with  
Enthusi- — -asm.

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move, etc.*

W'en the — trouble  
Hits yer native land  
Take a — rifle  
In yer — 'and.  
Keep yer — upper lip  
Stiff as stiff kin be,  
An' speed a — bullet for  
Pos- — -terity.

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move, etc.*

W'en the — bugle  
Sounds "Ad- — -vance"  
Don't be like a flock uv sheep  
In a — trance.

## THE AUSTRAL—AISE

Biff the — foeman  
Where it don't agree.  
Spifler- — -cate him  
To Eternity.

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move, etc.*

Fellers of Australier,  
Cobbers, chaps an' mates,  
Hear the — enemy  
Kickin' at the gates!  
Blow the — bugle,  
Beat the — drum,  
Upper-cut and out the cow  
To kingdom- — -come!

*Chorus:*

*Get a — move on,  
Have some — sense.  
Learn the — art of  
Self de- — -fence!*

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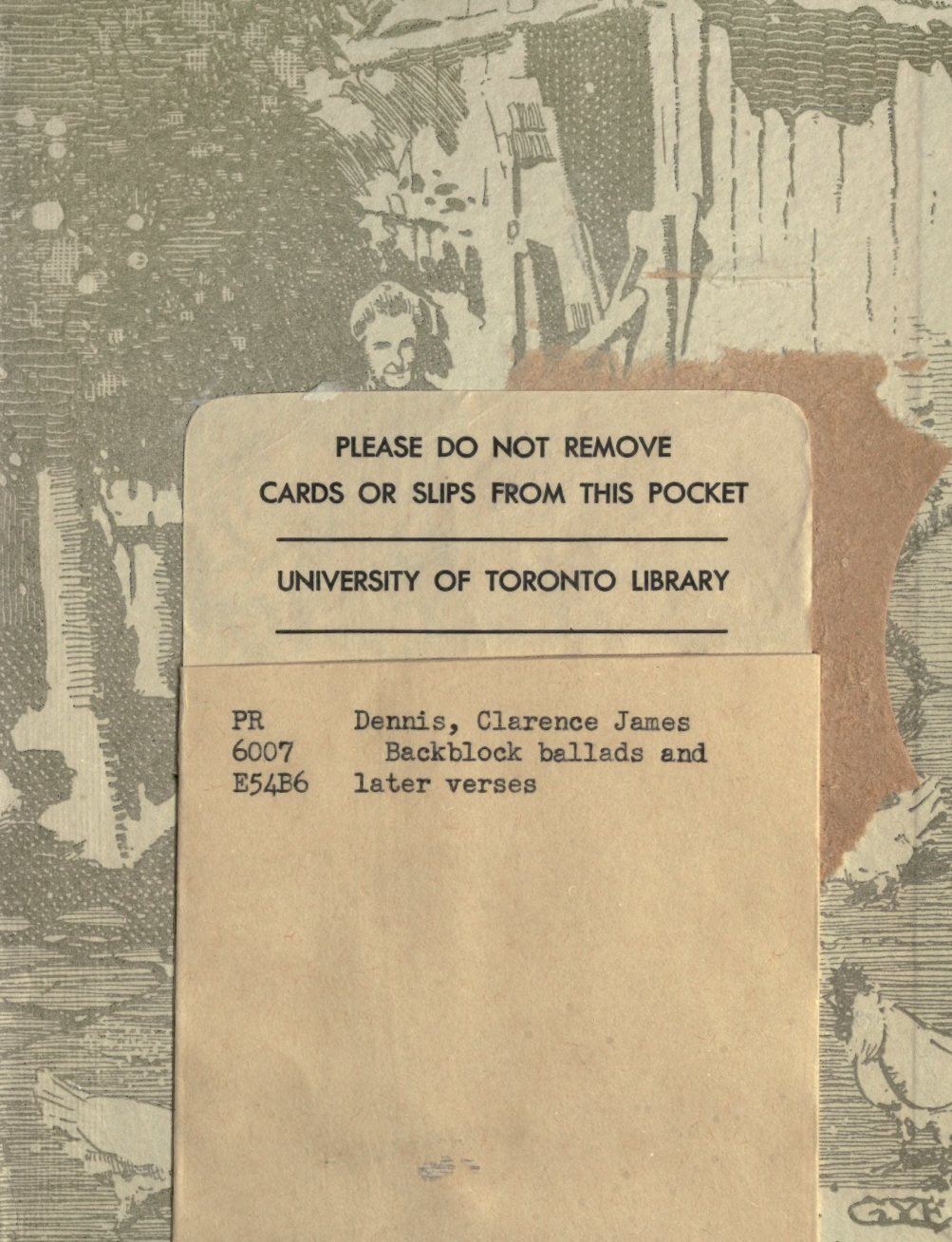
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